

INSTITUTE OF HISTORY,
ACADEMY OF SCIENCES OF THE USSR



Труды
Института истории
Академии наук СССР

A SHORT

HISTORY



OF THE

WORLD

in Two Volumes

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE WORLD

Volume

I

Edited by Prof. A. Z. MANFRED



Progress Publishers

Moscow

Translated from the Russian by KATHARINE JUDELSON
Designed by V. KUZYAKOV

CONTRIBUTORS:

ACADEMICIAN M. U. NECHKINA, ACADEMICIAN S. D. SKAZKIN,
ACADEMICIAN A. A. GUBER;
DR. M. A. ALPEROVICH, DR. L. N. KUTAKOV, DR. A. Z. MANFRED,
DR. S. L. UTCHENKO, DR. A. U. FADEYEV;
D. U. DEOPIK, CAND. SC. (HIST.)

КРАТКАЯ ВСЕМИРНАЯ ИСТОРИЯ.

КНИГА ПЕРВАЯ

На английском языке

FIRST PRINTING 1974

© *Translation into English.*
Progress Publishers 1974

Printed in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

CONTENTS

<i>Preface</i>	7
--------------------------	---

PART ONE

THE ANCIENT WORLD

<i>Chapter One.</i> PRIMITIVE SOCIETY	11
<i>Chapter Two.</i> THE MIDDLE EAST	17
<i>Chapter Three.</i> THE ANCIENT CIVILISATIONS OF INDIA AND CHINA	41
<i>Chapter Four.</i> PRE-CLASSICAL GREECE	51
<i>Chapter Five.</i> GREECE IN THE FIFTH AND FOURTH CENTURIES B.C. THE CRISIS IN GREEK SOCIETY	60
<i>Chapter Six.</i> THE RISE OF MACEDONIA AND THE EMPIRE OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT	81
<i>Chapter Seven.</i> THE ROMAN REPUBLIC	87
<i>Chapter Eight.</i> IMPERIAL ROME	112

PART TWO

THE MIDDLE AGES

<i>Chapter One.</i> THE TRANSITION TO FEUDALISM AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE EARLY FEUDAL STATES IN EUROPE	131
<i>Chapter Two.</i> THE EMERGENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF FEUDAL RELATIONS IN EASTERN, SOUTH-EASTERN AND SOUTHERN ASIA	151
<i>Chapter Three.</i> KIEV RUS	168
<i>Chapter Four.</i> THE TRANSITION TO FEUDALISM IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND CENTRAL ASIA	181
<i>Chapter Five.</i> WESTERN EUROPE IN THE ELEVENTH-FIFTEENTH CENTURIES	194
<i>Chapter Six.</i> THE STRUGGLE OF THE PEOPLES OF EASTERN AND CENTRAL EUROPE, CHINA, CENTRAL ASIA AND TRANS- CAUCASIA AGAINST FOREIGN INVASION IN THE THIR- TEENTH CENTURY	217
<i>Chapter Seven.</i> THE EMERGENCE OF A UNITED RUSSIAN STATE	224
<i>Chapter Eight.</i> THE EMERGENCE OF EARLY CAPITALISM IN WESTERN EUROPE	232

<i>Chapter Nine.</i> AMERICA ON THE EVE OF THE EUROPEAN CONQUEST	246
<i>Chapter Ten.</i> THE CENTRALISED RUSSIAN STATE FROM THE LATE FIFTEENTH TO THE EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENTURY. THE PEASANT WAR	253
<i>Chapter Eleven.</i> ASIA IN THE SIXTEENTH-SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES	265

PART THREE

THE MODERN PERIOD

<i>Chapter One.</i> THE ENGLISH BOURGEOIS REVOLUTION. FEUDAL ABSOLUTISM IN SEVENTEENTH- AND EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY EUROPE	281
<i>Chapter Two.</i> ABSOLUTISM IN RUSSIA	294
<i>Chapter Three.</i> ENGLAND IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES. THE NORTH AMERICAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE	313
<i>Chapter Four.</i> THE PEOPLES OF ASIA IN THE SEVENTEENTH-EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES	324
<i>Chapter Five.</i> THE FRENCH REVOLUTION	351
<i>Chapter Six.</i> EUROPE DURING THE NAPOLEONIC WARS	372
<i>Chapter Seven.</i> REACTION IN EUROPE AND THE REVOLUTIONARY LIBERATION MOVEMENTS OF THE 1820s AND 1830s	388
<i>Chapter Eight.</i> THE DEVELOPMENT OF CAPITALISM IN EUROPE AND AMERICA. THE GROWTH OF THE WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT AND THE BIRTH OF SCIENTIFIC COMMUNISM	401
<i>Chapter Nine.</i> REVOLUTIONARY FERMENT IN 1848-1849	413
<i>Chapter Ten.</i> RUSSIA IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY (1800-1860)	428
<i>Chapter Eleven.</i> POPULAR REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENTS IN ASIA	438
<i>Chapter Twelve.</i> NATIONAL BOURGEOIS MOVEMENTS IN EUROPE AND AMERICA	471
<i>Chapter Thirteen.</i> THE PARIS COMMUNE—1871	488
<i>Chapter Fourteen.</i> THE CAPITALIST WORLD AT THE END OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY	500
<i>Chapter Fifteen.</i> RUSSIA AFTER THE ABOLITION OF SERFDOM—FROM REFORM TO REVOLUTION	517
<i>Chapter Sixteen.</i> IMPERIALISM, THE HIGHEST AND LAST STAGE OF CAPITALISM	532
<i>Chapter Seventeen.</i> RUSSIA BECOMES THE CENTRE OF THE WORLD REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT. THE AWAKENING OF ASIA	541
<i>Chapter Eighteen.</i> THE FIRST WORLD WAR AND THE OVERTHROW OF TSARISM IN RUSSIA	570
CHRONICLE OF EVENTS	588

PREFACE

A Short History of the World attempts to trace the long and complex path traversed by the human race from the era of primitive society right up to the present day.

Inevitably the size of the present edition makes it impossible to give an equally full and detailed account of all the events which took place during these centuries—the development of human society, ancient civilisation, the military campaigns and conquests of the Middle Ages, the enormous strides in social progress made in modern times—revolutions, the most decisive of which was the Great October Socialist Revolution, ushering in as it did a new era of world history. The reader will have the opportunity to acquaint himself with the most outstanding events which played an influential part in the march of human progress. This we trust will be sufficient to convey a clear picture of the motive forces and main trends of the whole course of history.

What are the main laws underlying the development of human society? Wherein lies the essence of historical progress? What are the reasons for the sudden rise and fall of so many states in the past? Why is the final victory of communism inevitable, a victory which will bring to fruition age-old ideals cherished by hundreds of millions of people who have waged an unceasing struggle against social and national oppression?

The authors of this work set out their answers to these questions basing themselves on concrete historical material and the Marxist-Leninist theory on the laws governing the development of human society. While devoting much of their attention to the history of the Soviet Union, they have at the same time attempted to pinpoint the main features of economic, social, political and cultural development on all five continents, again within the limits dictated by the size of this work.

The first volume covers the vast period from primitive society right up to the October Revolution of 1917 in Russia. The gradual development of the productive forces of human society was accompanied by a marked acceleration of the historical process which at the same time started to acquire an increasingly universal aspect. Underlying all the manifold political events—during the era of slave-owning society and that of feudal and, in particular, capitalist society—is the class struggle, the struggle of the oppressed masses of working people against their exploiters in the name of social and national liberation. The decisive victory in this struggle was that of the October Revolution in Russia.

The second volume is devoted to the events of the new era ushered in by the October Revolution. The reason for this is the tremendous historical importance of the events of the modern epoch, in which the creative energy of the masses has come into its own and has started to play a truly decisive role in history, an epoch in which we are witnessing the revolutionary replacement of capitalism, the last type of society based on exploitation, by communism.

Leading Soviet historians have collaborated to compile the present work. Making use of the latest Soviet and foreign sources the contributors have also tried to ensure that this work should be accessible and of interest to the reader at large.

Part One

THE ANCIENT WORLD

Chapter One

PRIMITIVE SOCIETY

The History of Primitive Society

The history of the human race covers the whole period since man first appeared on the earth, roughly estimated at a million years. In the earliest period of human history there existed neither separate peoples nor states and men lived in small groups, clans or tribes. This period is known as the epoch of primitive society.

Archaeologists divided the history of mankind into three ages according to the material from which human implements were made: the Stone Age, the Bronze Age and the Iron Age.

However, these divisions proved inadequate, particularly with regard to the earliest periods of primitive society, some of which lasted for many thousands of years. For this reason new subdivisions were added. The Stone Age was divided into Palaeolithic (Old Stone Age), Mesolithic (Middle Stone Age) and Neolithic (New Stone Age). In addition, the Palaeolithic and Neolithic periods were divided into Lower, Middle and Upper.

Primitive Man

If we turn now not to archaeological but geological classifications, we find that man first appeared on this planet at the beginning of the so-called Quaternary period, when the ice-sheets then covering the whole of northern Asia, Europe and America started to recede and a warm climate emerged in those areas.

The type of man who appeared at that period possessed few characteristics distinguishing him from the animal kingdom. For example, at that time people, like monkeys, lived in trees, had no fixed dwelling place, and did not wear any form of clothes. However, the decisive difference was already there, namely, that man, unlike animals, had already learnt to make tools. Initially

these tools were of an exceedingly primitive kind. The most primitive type of stone implement made by man was known as the pebble tool; it consisted of a piece of stone, crudely fashioned with a slightly sharpened edge usually weighing approximately five pounds. Man used this primitive tool both as a means of defence or attack and as a work implement.

During that distant epoch man found his sustenance mainly by gathering whatever food nature happened to provide, such as fruits and berries, and by hunting small animals. Since people at that time were to a large extent helpless before the forces of nature, they were obliged to live, work and defend themselves in groups.

As a result there came into being groupings of primitive men, the level of whose communal development was so low that they were classified as "primitive human herds". These primitive herds were completely lacking in any concept of hierarchy or inequality. Neither did there exist any idea of property or family ties.

Anyone who held aloof from the herd was looked upon as a stranger, which at that time was the equivalent of an enemy. This was the main reason why people strove to stay together: life outside the herd was fraught with danger and beyond the powers of any separate individual.

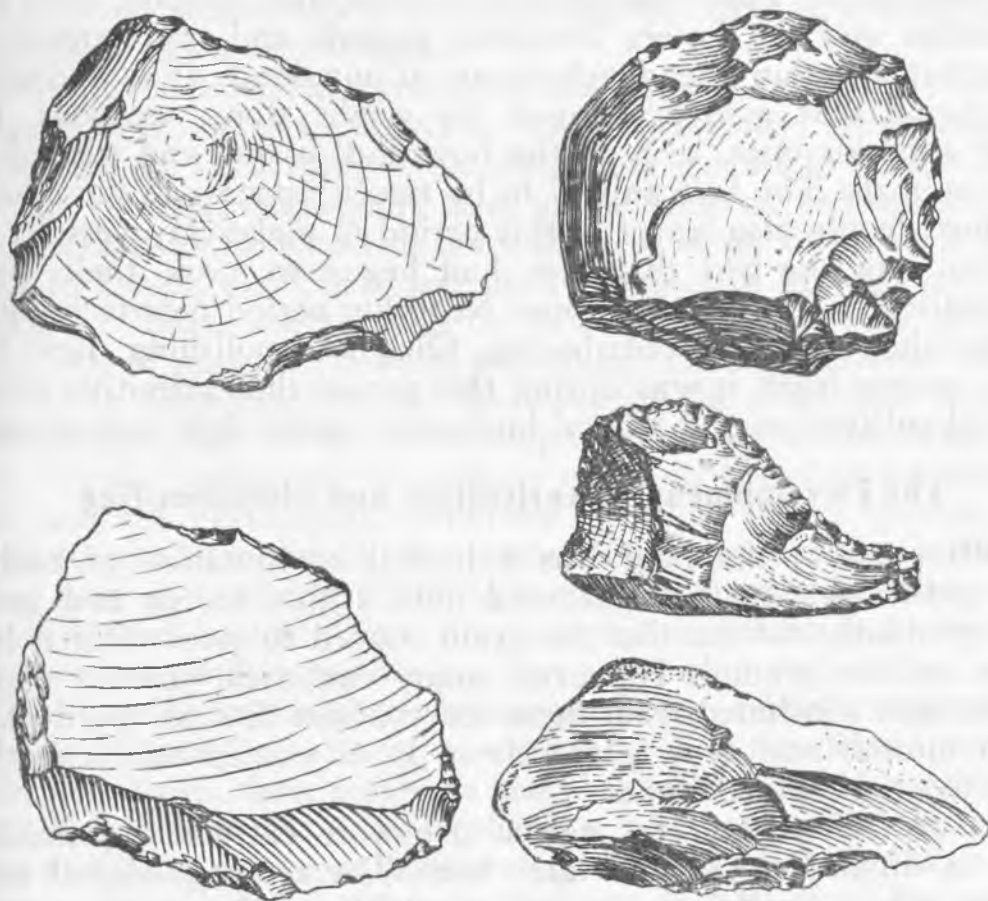
At the end of the Lower Palaeolithic there occurred a new (third) glaciation. Tundra-type climatic conditions developed over wide areas of Asia and Europe. Many animals were unable to survive such a sharp change of climate and became extinct. Meanwhile man succeeded in adapting himself to the new conditions. During the Lower Palaeolithic he had learnt to make fire, which he had already known how to use and preserve. The use of fire enabled him to protect himself from the cold and from wild animals and to cook his food (hitherto he had known only raw food). The art of making fire represented man's first major victory over nature.

It was during this epoch that the gradual transformation of the primitive human herd into a community of a more advanced type took place. The whole structure and pattern of life was changing. Man came down to earth from the trees. However he still did not build dwellings and made use of natural shelters, mainly caves. Techniques used for fashioning stone implements also changed. It was during this period that smaller and finer tools—the so-called core and flake tools—made their appearance.

The main occupation of man at this period of his development was hunting for large animals, such as deer or mammoths. This did not mean, however, that man had ceased to be a gatherer, but merely that hunting had replaced gathering as the most important method of obtaining food.

It was between the fortieth and twelfth millennia B.C. (the Upper Palaeolithic) that modern man evolved. It was also during this period that the first racial differences appeared.

There are theories which maintain that races have always existed, that is ever since man evolved as a species distinct from the rest of the animal kingdom. The supporters of such theories consider that certain races are naturally superior, whereas others



Tools of the Sinanthropus

possess specific deficiencies and are therefore inferior. However such an argument is completely spurious. In the first place racial distinctions did not evolve at the very beginning of the existence of the human race but only at a given stage of human development. Secondly, the most painstaking and impartial analysis will reveal that there are no fundamental differences between the various races and that the only distinctions are purely external, physical ones (such as skin colour, type of hair, etc.).

These were the main changes which took place in human society during the Palaeolithic period. The primitive herd ceased to exist and a new form of social life—the clan community—came into being.

The Era of the Clan

The original principle underlying this type of social structure was female kinship. This is explained by the fact that group marriages were the common practice, as a result of which children never knew who their fathers were, only their mothers. Thus kinship was exclusively matrilineal.

Society based on this matriarchal pattern lasted for several thousand years. This type of society coincided roughly with the Mesolithic and the Lower Neolithic periods and represented an important stage in the development of mankind. It was during this period that man exchanged his crude stone weapons for vastly superior ones, such as the bow and arrow, and started to tame animals. The first animal to be tamed appears to have been the dog. People also learnt at this period to make clay vessels, an indication of the fact that they had begun to cook their food systematically. During the Upper Neolithic period new techniques for working stone evolved: boring, fling and polishing. Last but by no means least, it was during this period that primitive forms of land cultivation and animal husbandry made their appearance.

The Development of Agriculture and Stockbreeding

Cultivation of the land was a logical continuation of earlier food gathering. As they gathered nuts, fruits, acorns and grain men gradually noticed that the grain started to grow after it had fallen on the ground. However, many centuries were to elapse before man concluded from these observations that he could plant grain himself and grow plants from it. It was in this way that primitive agriculture began.

The tools first used for agriculture were extremely primitive, such as digging sticks and later hoes. The crops produced were barley, wheat, millet, peas, and vegetables such as carrots.

The domestication of food animals developed from hunting practices. By this period men had learnt to hunt by "rounding up" their prey. Large groups of men would "round up" wild boar or oxen, and hunting became a collective activity on a mass scale. Gradually man realised that it was possible to make use of animals, to tame and breed them. Such were the primitive beginnings of stockbreeding.

The subsequent development of agriculture and stockbreeding is closely linked with the transition from matrilineal to patrilineal kinship. Agriculture and stockbreeding became spheres in which the man gradually ousted the woman. This step in its turn was bound up with the invention of the plough and the transition from agriculture based on hoeing, to that based on ploughing. Ploughing being a more strenuous activity, was done by men with

the aid of draught beasts. Woman was then allotted the new role of managing the domestic tasks.

The establishment of patrilineal kinship, or patriarchy, marked a new stage in the development of human society. It was in this period that the important transition from stone tools to metal ones took place. First of all men learnt to smelt copper, but since copper is a very soft metal they soon began to fuse it with tin thus making bronze. Bronze is much harder than copper, melts at a lower temperature and is more malleable. Thus it proved highly suitable for tools and weapons.

The development of agriculture and animal husbandry and the transition to metal tools led to tribes gradually specialising in either tillage or herding. The cultivators spread to various parts of the Western hemisphere and in the Eastern hemisphere they were mostly to be found in the valleys of large rivers such as the Nile in Egypt, the Tigris and the Euphrates in Mesopotamia, the Indus in India, the Hwang Ho in China and also in parts of Asia Minor and the Balkan peninsula. The pastoralists settled mainly in Southern Siberia, the basin of the Aral Sea, the Iranian plateau and the southern steppes bordering on the Black Sea.

A regular exchange of produce grew up between the cultivators and the pastoralists. Whereas in earlier times people had tried to produce enough to support their particular family or clan, they now started trying to produce a surplus because of the possibility of barter. There now existed an incentive to accumulate surplus produce within a given tribe, clan or family.

The urge to accumulate surplus produce for barter engendered a new attitude to prisoners captured in inter-tribal warfare. Whereas earlier these prisoners had usually been killed or absorbed into the ranks of the winning tribe, a new custom now grew up, that of taking prisoners and forcing them to work for their conquerors, thus turning them into slaves. In this way during the patriarchal era primitive or patriarchal slavery came into being. The appearance of slavery was one of the first signs of the disintegration of the primitive community.

The Disintegration of the Clan Structure

It was in the fourteenth century B.C. that the transition to iron tools began, first of all in Asia Minor. Iron ploughs, axes and spades make their appearance. The use of iron brought about a fundamental revolution in agricultural techniques and craftsmanship. Ironsmiths appeared, followed by the invention of the potter's wheel and the weaving loom. A further division of labour took place when craftsmen ceased to work on the land and cultivators no longer spent part of their time fashioning metal and clay.

One of the most important events of this epoch was the introduction of private property. The first private possessions were cattle and slaves, i.e., enslaved prisoners. Gradually land became an additional form of private property, one of the most important since it represented the source of all means of subsistence, and then tools for cultivating it as well. Inequality based on property relations also resulted from this and side by side with the categories of free men and slaves there emerged the new categories of rich and poor. Soon certain families or persons owned the best plots of land or the largest herds of cattle, while other families grew poorer and were ruined. Within the various clans a type of nobility became discernible, namely those who possessed riches and power. From among this nobility tribal leaders emerged and members of the council of elders.

Family ties started to play a less important part at this stage in the development of human society, being gradually replaced by links based on spatial proximity, i.e., links between people inhabiting the same area. Territorial communities sprang up at the time when the clan-based community was in the process of disintegration. They continued to exist for many centuries and were still to be found in some places right up to the beginning of the twentieth century, as in India and pre-revolutionary Russia.

The Origin of Classes and States

The development of man's technical equipment, the appearance of private property and finally the spread of slavery gradually led to the division of society into large groups occupying different social positions. There were those who owned land, tools and slaves but did no work themselves, and those who supported themselves by their own labour—either those who owned their implements of labour (peasants and craftsmen) or those who did not own anything and were obliged to work for their masters as slaves. These large groups occupying such widely divergent social positions came to be known as classes.

The class which owned riches and compelled others (slaves, peasants and craftsmen) to work for it started striving to hold them in subjection. To this end a new institution evolved, which was quite unknown in social communities based on principles of kinship, and which we refer to as the state. Various organs of power such as prisons, army and courts of justice were all component parts of the state apparatus.

From the moment of the division of society into classes and the emergence of the state a new era began in the history of mankind. So let us now turn from a general outline of the history of ancient man to a more detailed exposition of the history of individual states and peoples.

Chapter Two

THE MIDDLE EAST

EGYPT

Egypt is situated in the north-east corner of the African continent and consists of a narrow valley (ranging from 3 to 20 miles in width) in the lower reaches of the River Nile, with desert stretching on either side.

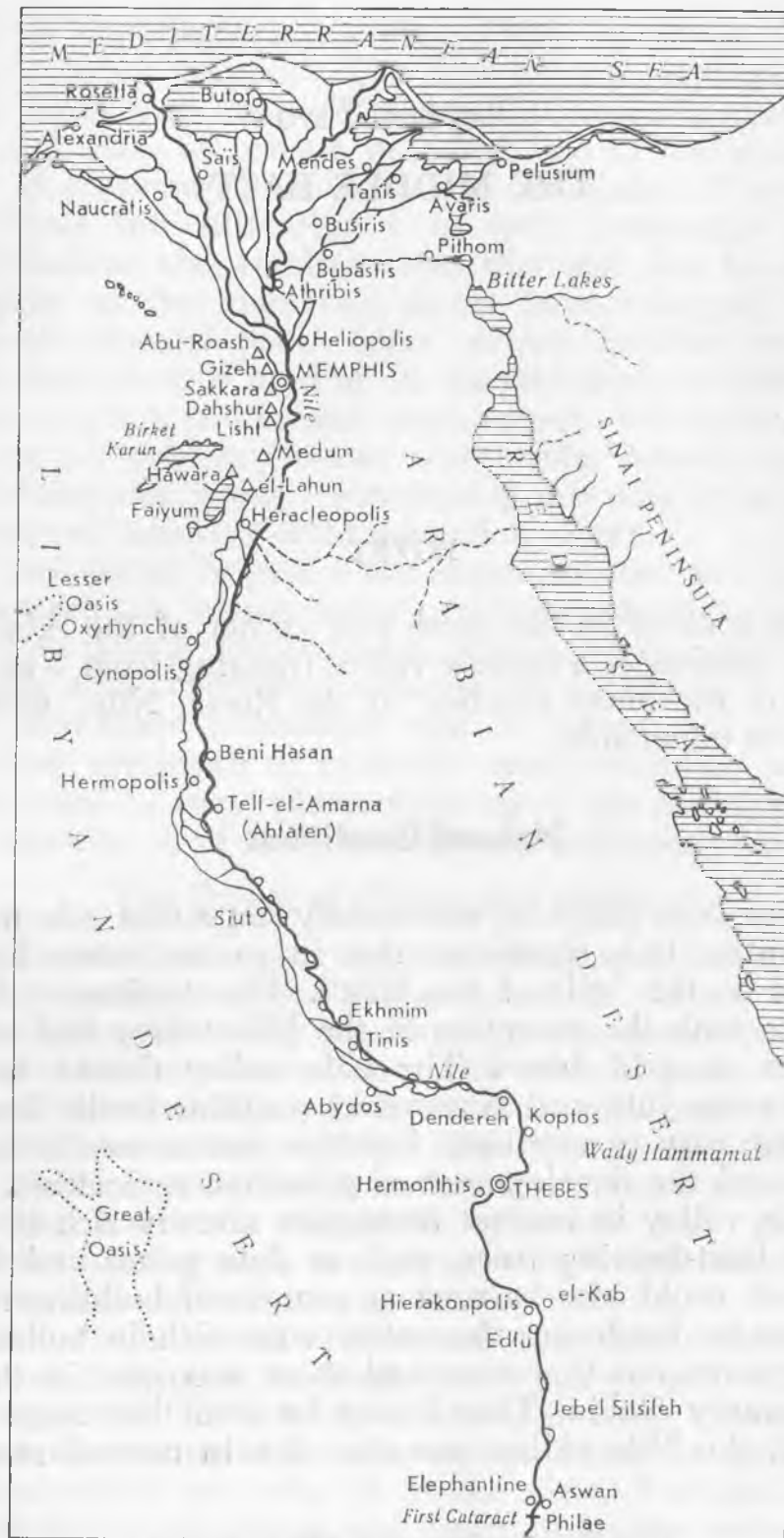
Natural Conditions

The River Nile plays an enormously important role in the life of the country. It is significant that in ancient times Egypt was referred to as the "gift of the Nile". The territory of North-East Africa with the exception of the Nile valley had long since turned into an arid desert. The Nile valley thanks to annual floods (between July and November) contains fertile land which is extremely easy to cultivate. For this reason conditions in this area favoured the development of primitive agriculture.

The Nile valley in ancient times was already rich in valuable species of fruit-bearing trees, such as date palms and the sycamore, which could also be used as sources of building materials. The mountains bordering the valley were rich in building stone such as granite and limestone and there was gold in the mountains of nearby Nubia. Thus it can be seen that apart from its fertile soil, the Nile valley was also rich in natural resources.

The Formation of a Class Society and State in Egypt

The people of ancient Egypt consisted of various tribes which had settled in the Nile valley from time immemorial. The population was chiefly engaged in land cultivation, although hunting



ANCIENT EGYPT

and fishing were also important. Cultivation in this area required the construction of irrigation systems. Since this task was too great for isolated families and clans and since it was also far from expedient to dig canals for the irrigation of small plots of land, increasingly large groups made up of a number of clan communities came into being. These groups were called nomes. Each nome had its own name, its own particular customs and sometimes its own dialect. Nomarchs or rulers emerged, each family within the nome had its elder, and slavery became an increasingly widespread practice. Gradually these nomes started to unite among themselves and two kingdoms emerged in Egypt—the Southern and the Northern kingdom.

A conflict then started between the two kingdoms, from which the Southern kingdom emerged victorious. In approximately the year 3200 B.C. the Pharaoh Menes first united the whole land of Egypt under his rule. State power was established in the country from then on. This power was in the hands of the nobility, the large landowners. The history of Egypt is generally divided into three main periods: those of the Old, Middle and New kingdoms.

The Old and the Middle Kingdoms

In the Old Kingdom the main activity of the people was still agriculture. The land was cultivated by peasant communes and each commune was administrated by its council of elders. These councils organised the collection and payment of taxes and also the recruitment of labour for the “royal projects”. This was the name used in Egypt for labour conscription compulsory for all working in the peasant communes. Slaves in Egypt as a rule were used on the large estates belonging to the king’s courtiers or on land belonging to the temples.

Egyptian Pharaohs of that time wielded enormous power. They were given the title of kings of Upper and Lower (Southern and Northern) Egypt and they wore two crowns, a white one and a red one. The Pharaoh’s chief advisor was called a vizier who in his turn supervised those who directed the various spheres of the administration. The vizier’s duties included supervision of the various storehouses for grain, gold, vineyards, the round-up of oxen, military affairs and sacrifices to be managed. In addition the vizier also supervised all the work for the Pharaoh, the exchequer and the high court. The vizier himself and the various storehouses all had large staffs of scribes.

The Pharaohs of the Old Kingdom conducted military campaigns against the peoples of the Sinai peninsula and Nubia.



The pyramid of Chephren (IV dynasty)

These campaigns brought Egypt rich booty, including malachite, copper ore, gold, ivory, ebony and also a large number of prisoners who were not killed but enslaved. It was with good reason that these Egyptian prisoners were called the "living dead".

It was in the Old Kingdom that the remarkable custom existed of building pyramids, the enormous stone tombs which the Pharaohs and their courtiers had built for themselves during their lifetime. In Egypt approximately seventy of these pyramids have survived right down to the present day. The largest and most famous of them is the pyramid of Cheops or Khufu which is 475 feet high and approximately 2,400 feet square at its base; its construction required 2,300 thousand stone blocks each weighing two tons. The pyramid took twenty years to build despite the fact that the whole of the rural population of Egypt was conscripted for this work, at the rate of 100,000 every three months. Such were the conditions of work in the royal household in the Old Kingdom.

The construction of the pyramids was bound up with the Egyptian religion and in particular with the belief in an after-life, provided the body was specially preserved and regularly supplied with food and drink. This belief lies at the root of the custom of embalming, that is of mummifying the deceased, an art in which the Egyptians came to excel.

At the end of the Old Kingdom the central power of the kings began to weaken and Egypt was once again divided up into a series of nomes, not infrequently warring against each other. Reunification of the country was achieved shortly before the beginning of the twentieth century B.C. This period is known as the Middle Kingdom.

During the Middle Kingdom large-scale works were undertaken to extend and improve the irrigation system at the Fayum oasis. Trade and a wide variety of crafts flourished. A feature of this period was the stratification of the peasant communes, large sections of the peasantry becoming impoverished and ruined.

In the middle of the eighteenth century B.C. a large-scale revolt of peasants, artisans and slaves took place in Egypt. The whole country was engulfed in this uprising, the Pharaoh was obliged to abdicate and the rich landowners were driven from their palaces. Mummies of former kings were looted and cast out of their tombs and pyramids. The royal granaries and treasure-houses and the temples were captured and the stores of food and valuables distributed among the people. All tax and tribute documents were destroyed. As is written in one of the ancient Egyptian chronicles, "the earth whirled round like a potter's wheel", because the poor took up residence in the houses of the rich lords, donned their garments and forced the lords to work for them.

At the end of the eighteenth century B.C. Egypt was laid waste by an invasion of a nomadic Asian tribe, the Hyksos. This people conquered the country and for nearly a century and a half the Egyptians lived under the yoke of these foreign oppressors until finally a liberation movement gathered sufficient momentum to drive out the invaders and reunite the country. This event marked the beginning of the New Kingdom.

The New Kingdom

During this period Egypt became a strong military power. Pharaoh Ahmose I who freed Egypt from the Hyksos conquerors pursued them deep into Hither Asia and then embarked on an expedition against Nubia. However, the true founder of this new Egyptian military power was Tuthmosis III (1525-1491 B.C.) who led seventeen expeditions into Asia, conquering Syria, Palestine, Libya and Nubia. He had large forces at his disposal, made up of infantry, armed with bows and arrows and spears, and cavalry, equipped with chariots. Apart from his land troops Tuthmosis also possessed a war fleet including both rowing galleys and sailing ships.



Courtyard of the temple of Karnak at Thebes

These campaigns brought home great quantities of booty which went mainly to fill the king's coffers and granaries; thousands of slaves and cattle were also brought back to the king's estates. The Pharaohs also bestowed rich gifts and privileges on the temples and those who served in them. For example, the temple of Amon Ra—the god who was most popular in Thebes, the capital—was granted complete authority over a whole region in the Lebanon with three large towns after one of these campaigns.

All this led to an extremely rapid growth of the power of the priesthood in the political life of the country. Of particular importance was the temple of Amon Ra in Thebes: this temple owned more land, slaves and peasants than all the rest of the temples put together. Hence the enormous political influence exerted by the Theban priests, who even tried to wrest certain powers from the Pharaohs themselves.

Pharaoh Ikhnaton (Amenhotep IV, 1424-1388 B.C.) took measures to put an end to this state of affairs and decided to introduce a religious reform. Polytheism was abandoned and replaced by the worship of one god, the Sun-god Aton. Temples were built to Aton all over the country, and the Pharaoh assumed the name Ikhnaton—"Beloved of Aton" in preference to his original title Amenhotep.

However Ikhnaton's reforms were short-lived. The struggle against his reforms even led to an uprising and, although Ikhnaton succeeded in quelling it, after his death the reforms were soon abandoned and the priesthood became even more powerful than before. For instance, during the reign of Ramses II (1317-1251 B.C.) the area of temple lands doubled and the leading members of the priesthood felt themselves quite independent of the king. Meanwhile the office of high priest became hereditary.

During the reign of Ramses II the last large-scale military campaigns were undertaken. On Syrian territory the Egyptians had to match their strength for the first time with that of a new and mighty power—the Hittites, who by that time had conquered almost the whole of Syria. The fighting lasted for a long time, and the outcome was not decisive, Syria being divided between the Hittites and the Egyptians.

The end of the New Kingdom saw a marked weakening of Egypt's military might. A number of her vassal states reasserted their independence and separatism among the various nomes came into play again. Soon Egypt was herself to fall prey to foreign conquerors.

The Religion and Culture of Ancient Egypt

Religion was a central feature in the life of the ancient Egyptians. A typical feature of Egyptian religious belief was the deification of animals and birds. The town of Memphis had its cult of the bull-god Apis, the hawk-headed sky-god Horus was worshipped in the towns of Tanis and Buto and several nomes were named after animals: the Antelope nome, the Crocodile nome, etc. Gradually the gods worshipped by the most powerful nomes came to be worshipped on a national scale, for example the Sun-god Ra, the creator of the world Amon, and the god and goddess of fertility Osiris and Isis. The cult of Osiris and Isis was closely bound up with agricultural traditions. The legend of the death of Osiris and his subsequent resurrection was an allegory of the planting and sprouting of corn. At sowing and harvest time magnificent dramatic pageants were organised in the honour of Osiris and his consort.

A major achievement of ancient Egyptian culture was the development of writing. For writing on stone the Egyptians used special signs or hieroglyphs, from which a simplified script was developed for writing on papyrus. Important advances were also made in literature (songs, legends, travel annals, etc.), architecture and the fine arts. Quite apart from the pyramids the ruins of

splendid temples, such as that at Karnak for example, are still to be seen today.

The ancient Egyptians were also familiar with the basic principles of a number of sciences such as mathematics, astronomy and medicine. They used a decimal counting system and were able to calculate the surface area of the triangle, trapezium and even that of the circle, using $\pi = 3.16$. On the basis of observations of the movements of the heavenly bodies a calendar dividing the year into twelve months and 365 days was worked out. The widespread practice of embalming led to increasing familiarity with human anatomy and to the development of such fields of medicine as surgery.

BABYLONIA AND ASSYRIA

In the same way that the Nile valley was the centre of ancient civilisation in North-East Africa so the ancient kingdoms of the Middle East were to grow up in the valleys of the Tigris and the Euphrates, that is in the "land between the rivers" or Mesopotamia.

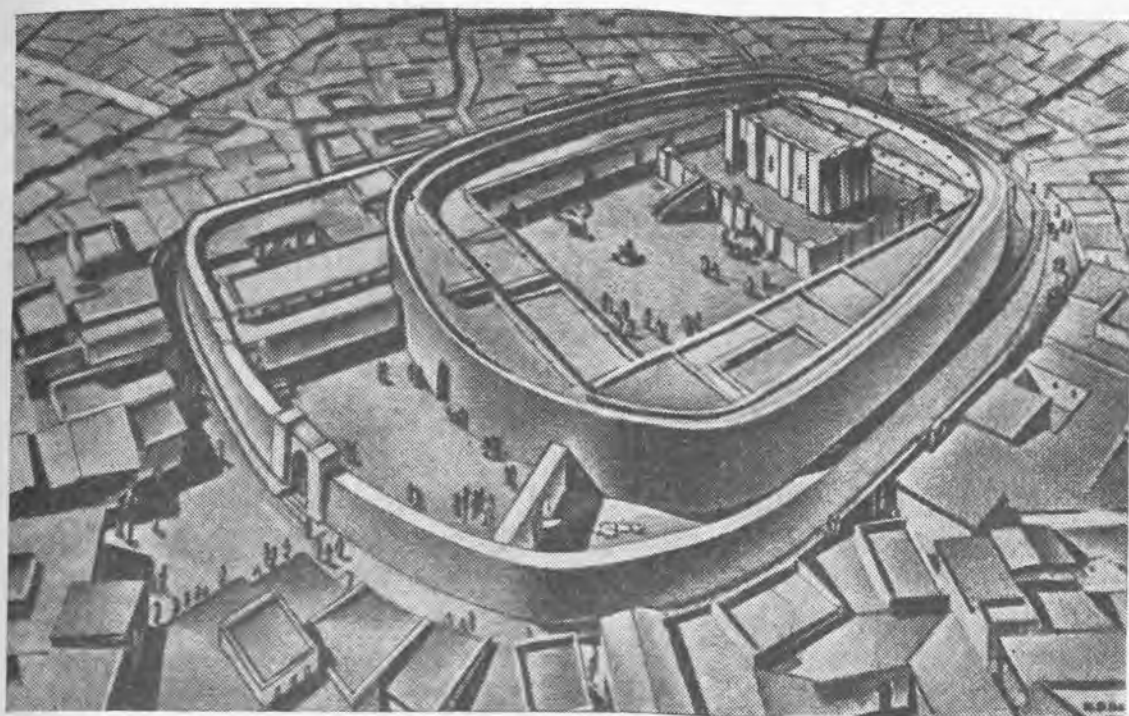
Natural Conditions

Natural conditions in Mesopotamia are far from uniform. The northern part consists of hilly territory watered by small mountain streams and an abundant rainfall. The southern part of Mesopotamia is a marshy depression, the soil consisting of alluvial deposits. The rivers overflowed their banks from March to July, and the water in the fields then dried up. As a result of the uneven extent to which the soil dried up in different places even in ancient times it was essential to construct an artificial means of regulating the water supply.

The natural riches of Mesopotamia were less spectacular than those of the Nile valley. However, limestone and clay were to be found in some places; important types of vegetation were date palms and various kinds of reeds; in the mountains which lined the valley wild cattle, goats, boars and lions roamed and the rivers were teeming with fish.

The Ancient Kingdoms of Sumer and Akkad

In the southern part of Mesopotamia and along the shores of the Persian Gulf tribes called the Sumerians had settled very early. It was they who first built irrigation works consisting of



A reconstruction of the "round temple" and living quarters of a Sumer town. 3000-2500 B.C.

canals, reservoirs and dykes. The main occupation of the Sumerians was agriculture. The land in that region as in Egypt was divided up among peasant communes and the most common crops were barley, wheat, flax and sesame. The peasant communes were obliged to pay taxes in kind, generally constituting a tenth of the crop, which went to the royal granaries. In the royal and temple estates, where slave labour predominated, the land was mostly planted with orchards and stockbreeding flourished.

Towards the end of the 4th millennium B.C. in southern Mesopotamia there existed more than twenty small estates. We do not know their names, but we do know that their rulers were prince-priests called "patesi" and these kingdoms have accordingly been referred to as "patesiats". At the very end of the 4th millennium B.C. a struggle began between the larger of these "patesiats", such as Lagash and Umma, each striving to unite southern Mesopotamia under their own hegemony.

The central and north-western parts of Mesopotamia were inhabited by Semitic tribes, who appear to have originally come from Arabia, and took their name from that of their chief town, Akkad. In approximately the year 2500 B.C. the ruler of the Akkadians was the talented administrator and military leader Sargon I. He was the first man in history to recruit regular troops from among peasants in the poor village communes, who were later to receive plots of land by way of payment for their military

service. Relying on these troops Sargon carried out a successful series of military campaigns. With his conquest of Sumer towns he succeeded in uniting the whole of Mesopotamia under his rule. He appears also to have conquered Elam, a state situated in the mountains to the east of Mesopotamia and also led an expedition into Syria and Asia Minor. It was with good reason that at the end of his reign Sargon I conferred on himself the proud title of "king of the lands".

The Ancient Kingdom of Babylon

Shortly before 2000 B.C. Akkad was invaded from Arabia by tribes known as the Amorites, and Sumer by the Elamites. Soon these invaders succeeded in capturing the whole valley of Mesopotamia. Then war broke out between the Amorites and the Elamites. The war ended with a decisive victory for the Amorite kings, and the rise of the town of Babylon which was soon to become an extremely important economic, political and cultural centre. The flowering of the ancient Babylonian Kingdom and its eventual unification round this new centre took place during the reign of the famous King Hammurabi (1792-1750 B.C.).

Hammurabi succeeded in defeating the Elamites and then conquered the kingdom of Mari to the north of Babylon, and finally the town of Assur, the centre of what was later to be the extremely powerful state of Assyria. However, Hammurabi was famous not only as a conqueror but also for his famous code of laws. This code, carved into a basalt pillar and consisting of 282 statutes, has been preserved intact up till the present day. This code provides us with an interesting insight into the economic and political structure of the ancient Babylonian society.

Hammurabi's code clearly appertains to a society with a rigid class structure. The property rights of the landowners, priests and merchants are guaranteed and the interests of these groups are carefully protected. We learn that in the kingdom of Babylon not only agriculture was highly developed but various crafts and trading as well. The code lists the following crafts: pottery, stone-masonry, leather tanning, dress making and ironwork. As far as trading is concerned it is interesting to note that large-scale transactions were negotiated by the temples or even the kings themselves. Their orders were carried out by merchants, who in their turn employed agents and assistants. The main wares traded with the neighbouring states were grain, cattle, silver and copper.

The Code of Hammurabi also sheds light on the status of slaves in ancient Babylon. A particularly widespread practice



MESOPOTAMIA IN THE 4th-3rd MILLENNIUM B.C.

appears to be what is called debt slavery. If a debtor was unable to pay back his debt within the appointed term he was obliged to pay it off by means of his own or his children's labour. Such servitude could be made to last a whole lifetime, but Hammurabi limited debt slavery to a period of three years.

Babylonian society during the reign of Hammurabi reached a high level of development. However, this Golden Age was to be of short duration since the country was to suffer a number of crushing invasions, resulting in the collapse of the ancient kingdom of Babylon.

Assyria

The Assyrian kingdom grew up out of a small commune in northern Mesopotamia centred round the town of Assur. The most illustrious chapter in the history of the military state of Assyria was in the eighth century B.C. The Assyrian King, Tiglath-Pileser III (745-727 B.C.), waged a number of victorious campaigns. He conquered Syria and Phoenicia. The kings of Tyre and Israel paid him tribute. His expedition against the state of Urartu ended in a crushing defeat for the latter. Finally Tiglath-Pileser conquered Babylonia and made himself King of Babylon.

His military feats were continued by other Assyrian kings—Sargon II (722-705 B.C.) and Esarhaddon (680-669 B.C.). As a result of their conquests and campaigns Assyria became a tremendous power, incorporating all central and eastern Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine and part of Egypt. Measured by the standards of those times Assyria was undoubtedly a world power.

Assyria was a state of warlords and slave-owners. Slavery was more developed there than it had been in either Egypt or Babylon. In the king's employ there were thousands of slaves who were often used for the construction of roads, canals and even whole towns. The slave trade was also developed on a fairly wide scale.

Assyria was famous for its high level of military organisation. The Assyrian army was divided into various arms: 1) two-horse chariots, 2) mounted cavalry (which made its first appearance in the Assyrian army), 3) infantry equipped with either heavy or light weapons, 4) engineers, and 5) siege troops (equipped with stone-throwers and battering rams). The army provided the backbone of the king's power and it was customary for kings to present themselves to the army on acceding to the throne.

However, the Assyrian military power was a clay-legged colossus. The various parts of this enormous state were not sufficiently close-knit and the subject nations and peoples were exposed to

cruel oppression. Insurgent Babylon together with the Medes (the people of a large state situated on the Iranian plateau) dealt a crushing blow to the kingdom of Assyria.

The Religion and Culture of Babylonia and Assyria

The role of religion in Babylonian society was no less important than in ancient Egypt. All spheres of cultural life—from literature to science—were subject to powerful religious influence. The most important gods were Marduk, Shamash and the vegetation deities Tammuz and Ishtar (roughly equivalents of Osiris and Isis). In addition there were also various popular beliefs connected with spirits of the local rivers and canals, and the spirits of the dead were also worshipped.

In Mesopotamia the written language, unlike that of the ancient Egyptians, was cuneiform. Wedge-shaped signs were imprinted on clay tablets which once they had been fired could be preserved indefinitely.

A large number of works of ancient Babylonian literature have survived to the present day, including the famous epic of Gilgamesh, in which the legend of the Flood first figured.

The rudiments of science in ancient Babylonia were closely bound up with agriculture. As far back as the Sumerian era there had existed a sexagesimal system of counting, to which the present division of the circle into 360 degrees can be traced back. The Babylonians mastered the four arithmetical principles, simple fractions, squaring, cubing and square roots. They were also quite advanced in astronomy and succeeded in picking out five of the



The Goddess Ishtar. Statue found in Mari (c. 1800 B.C.)

planets and calculating their orbits. Their study of the lunar phases enabled them to draw up a calendar divided into years, months and days (each day contained 12 hours and each hour was divided up into thirty minutes).

Assyrian culture cannot be regarded as indigenous. On the whole, the Assyrians, thanks to their conquests and trade links, acted as the disseminators of Babylonian culture throughout the other countries of the ancient East. For example the famous library belonging to the Assyrian King Assurbanipal contained a collection of literary and religious texts, scientific treatises, reference books and dictionaries written in various languages, and represented a real treasure-house of the cultural achievements of the ancient East.

THE HITTITE KINGDOM

The Formation and Ascendancy of the Hittite Kingdom

The Hittite Kingdom came into being soon after 2000 B.C. on the banks of the Kizil Irmak river (the classical Halys) in Asia Minor. The indigenous population of the area, commonly known as the proto-Hittites, were invaded early in the 2nd millennium B.C. by Nesite tribes. The Hittite nation was the result of the fusion of these peoples.

The Hittite Kingdom is traditionally purported to have been founded by the semi-legendary King Labarnash (seventeenth century B.C.), whose name was later used as a royal title. Another famous ruler was King Murshilish I (sixteenth century B.C.) who captured and plundered Babylon, carrying off large numbers of prisoners.

The Hittite Empire was at its height in the fifteenth century B.C. during the reign of King Shuppiluliumash. Under his leadership the Hittites conquered all the territory of Asia Minor between their kingdom and Syria and subjugated the kingdom of Mitanni (situated in the upper reaches of the Tigris and Euphrates). Shuppiluliumash's successors took advantage of Egypt's temporary setbacks to make their way into Syria and even Palestine. At the end of the fourteenth and beginning of the thirteenth century B.C. there were large-scale confrontations between the Hittites and the Egyptians which eventually ended in a treaty with Ramses II, which laid down that the whole of northern Syria should remain in the hands of the Hittites.

This was a period of outstanding military prowess but soon afterwards Hittite power began to wane. Around 1200 B.C. Asia

Minor, Syria and Palestine were invaded by the Peoples of the Sea (from islands in the Aegean Sea) who were later to lay waste the Hittite Kingdom. It was broken up into a series of small princedoms, and finally became an Assyrian province.

The Social Structure and Culture of the Hittite Kingdom

Hittite society during the reign of Shuppiluliumash was a typical example of a slave-holding society. In the Hittite code of laws (fifteenth-thirteenth centuries B.C.) more than 20 articles were concerned with slaves, and the number of slaves brought to the country as prisoners of war was very large. Slave labour was also accepted as a form of debt payment.

The chief occupation of the Hittite people was stockbreeding, followed by agriculture, fruit and vine growing. The kingdom was ruled over by a king who was regarded as a divinity of equal status with the Sun-god. The court officials, priests, warriors, money-lenders and merchant-traders also played an important role in state affairs. The Hittites carried on brisk trade with Egypt and various other countries.

Excavations in Boghazkeui (150 miles from Ankara) on the site of the former Hittite capital have brought us important information with regard to Hittite culture. A large archive of the Hittite kings was unearthed. The Hittite language was originally written in a hieroglyphic script which was later replaced under the influence of Assyria by a cuneiform script. Hittite inscriptions were first deciphered by the Czech scholar Hrozný. Extant monuments of Hittite art were found in the form of monumental sculptures and reliefs which in their turn also showed strong Assyrian influence.

URARTU

The state of Urartu covered a wide upland area between Asia Minor, Iran and northern Mesopotamia, surrounded by high mountains. The country was rich in forests, stone and metal deposits.

The Formation and Development of the State of Urartu

The early inhabitants of this area were related to the proto-Hittites. In ancient Assyrian inscriptions references are made to two states, Urartu (on the territory of present-day Armenia) and

Nairi (on the shores of Lake Van) which later, in approximately the ninth century B.C., were to be united under King Sardur I.

The power of Urartu rose at the beginning of the eighth century B.C. In the conflict with Assyria at this time the Urartians scored a number of outstanding successes. During the reign of Argistis I (781-760 B.C.) Assyrian troops suffered a crushing defeat and Urartu was able to annex parts of Transcaucasia. Sardur II (760-730) continued this policy of annexation started by his predecessor. During his reign more territory in Transcaucasia was won (in the area around Lake Sevan), and even Northern Syria was conquered. However this success was short-lived for in the middle of the eighth century B.C. the Assyrian King Tiglath-Pileser III led two expeditions against Urartu and laid the land waste. The final blow to Urartian power was the invasion of Sargon II in 714 B.C. when the rich capital of Musasir was captured and plundered. The now seriously weakened state of Urartu continued to exist until the sixth century B.C. when it was finally conquered by the Medes and Scythians.

The Social Structure and Culture of Urartu

Like other ancient kingdoms of the East, Urartu was a slaveholding society. The large number of prisoners taken during the military campaigns of Argistis and Sardur II were put to work as slaves. Slave labour was used in the Urartian copper and iron mines, for construction and irrigation work and also in stockbreeding. The ruling class was made up of the slave-owning aristocracy, the military leaders and the priests, with a king at the helm of state.

The basic occupation of the people of Urartu was stockbreeding but agriculture was also well developed, notably the cultivation of wheat, millet and barley, and there were many orchards and vineyards. Agriculture was greatly promoted by the existence of a well-developed artificial irrigation system. Archaeological excavations have testified to the high level of Urartian craftsmanship in various technical and metallurgical skills. Large workshops were to be found attached to the palaces and temples.

Urartian culture was fairly closely linked with that of Babylon and Assyria. For example, the cuneiform script was adopted from the Assyrians (and later simplified to a certain extent). The most original achievement was in architecture: the temple at Musasir with its pedimented columns is almost a prototype of the Greek temples. Excavation work also brought to light a large number of bronze artifacts such as statues of winged bulls, the



Tomb of the Urartu King Argistis I, cut into the rock at Van. 8th century B.C.

lavish thrones of the Urartian kings and shields decorated with work of a rare intricacy. Fragments of murals have been found in the ruins of various palaces and temples.

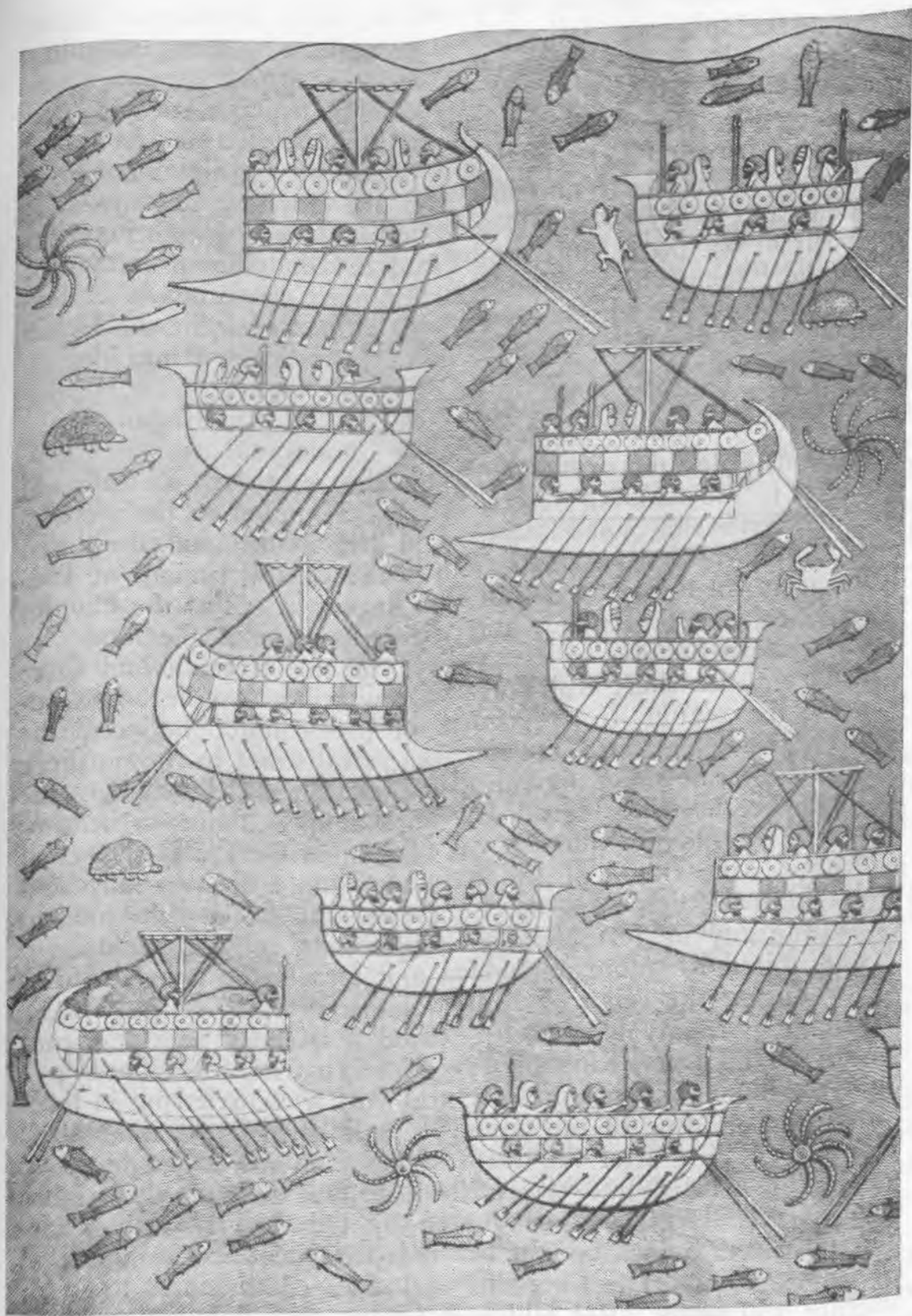
PHOENICIA

Phoenicia was situated in a narrow strip of land along the coast of Syria inhabited by numerous western Semitic tribes. The common name applied to them all was Phoenicians, a name given them by the Greeks. Phoenicia was never a single united kingdom, but was made up of a collection of independent townships each with its adjacent agricultural land. The largest of these towns were Ugarit, Byblus, Tyre and Sidon.

From approximately 1500 B.C. onwards the Phoenician towns were under Egyptian or Hittite rule, until in the twelfth century B.C. they regained their independence and Tyre began to occupy a predominant position among them. King Hiram I of Tyre (969-936) undertook large-scale military campaigns, leading an expedition to Cyprus and several to Africa. During that period Tyre extended her hegemony over the towns of Byblus and Sidon, and became an important political and trade centre. On its advantageous island site Tyre was for a long time considered an impregnable fortress. However, the Phoenicians' independence was short-lived, for they were conquered by Assyria at the end of the eighth century B.C.

Grain and grapes were the main crops in Phoenicia. Small use was made of slave labour in agriculture (indeed slavery was never developed on a wide scale) and the main labour force was made up of peasants living in communes. The townspeople were engaged mainly in crafts and trade. Even in ancient times the Phoenicians were famed as traders and skilled seamen. The Phoenicians exported their own wine, timber and the work of their craftsmen, but the merchants did not limit themselves to these items: they also acted as middlemen, buying goods from other countries and reselling them. The Phoenicians conducted trade with Egypt, Assyria, Mesopotamia, Asia Minor and so on.

For trade purposes Phoenician seamen undertook long voyages to the countries of the Aegean and Mediterranean and they were the first to reach by sea the "pillars of Hercules", or Gibraltar. Wherever it was possible to be assured of a more or less regular supply of valuable goods the Phoenicians founded settlements or colonies. Colonies of this type were set up on various islands in the Aegean (such as Thasos and Rhodes) and in the Mediterranean (such as Cyprus, Malta and Sicily). On the north coast of Africa the Phoenicians founded the town of Carthage which was



Phoenician war and trading vessels. Assyrian relief from the temple of Sennacherib at Nineveh. Eight-seventh centuries B.C.

later to develop into an important state and set up a large number of colonies of its own.

The most important achievement of Phoenician culture was the development and diffusion of an alphabet (dating from the thirteenth century B.C.) which was doubtlessly a direct result of the rapid development of trade and the growing need for the frequent and rapid compilation of commercial documents. On the basis of Egyptian hieroglyphs and the Babylonian cuneiform script the Phoenicians produced an alphabet consisting of 22 letters. This alphabet was later to serve as a model for the Greek alphabet and hence many subsequent forms of writing.

PALESTINE

Ancient Palestine stretched from the southern foothills of Lebanon to the Arabian desert, and was bounded on the west by the Mediterranean Sea. Plateaux and arid desert land alternated with fertile valleys. In earliest times the coastal regions of Palestine were inhabited by one of the Aegean tribes of the Peoples of the Sea, the Philistines, and the remainder of the land by north-western Semites or Canaanites. In the fifteenth and fourteenth centuries B.C., Apiru or Hebrew tribes first began to appear in the region. In the course of the conflict between the Hebrew tribes and the Canaanites and Philistines in the northern part of Palestine the Kingdom of Israel (founded by Saul in the eleventh century B.C.) gradually took shape. About a century later the Kingdom of Judaea was formed in the southern part of Palestine. King David of Judaea was to unite the two kingdoms under his rule, drive out the Philistines and declare the ancient Canaanite city of Jerusalem his capital and religious centre.

The united Kingdom of Judaea and Israel rose to new ascendancy during the reign of King Solomon (tenth century B.C.). During that relatively peaceful period a friendly pact was concluded with Hiram, King of Tyre, foreign trade developed at a rapid rate and impressive architectural work was carried out in Jerusalem (the building of the famous temple of Solomon inter alia).

However, soon after the death of Solomon the united kingdom was to be divided into two parts. At the end of the eighth century B.C. Israel was conquered by the Assyrian King Sargon II, while Judaea bought her independence at the price of enormous tribute. The Kingdom of Judaea continued to exist for another 150 years, after which it fell to the Babylonian King Nebuchadrezzar, who took Jerusalem by storm and razed it (586 B.C.) leading masses of people into captivity in Babylon ("Babylonian captivity").

In the northern part of Palestine land-cultivation was the

main occupation, while in the South it was stockbreeding. The peasants lived in communes and in Palestine slave labour was more widespread than in Phoenicia. Large armies of slaves worked on the royal and temple lands. The original inhabitants of the country, the Canaanites, were also enslaved.

Religion played an important role in the life of the ancient Hebrews. The Hebrew religion had many features in common with the religion of the Phoenicians. Particularly widespread was the worship of Yahweh, or Jehovah. Originally Yahweh was the god of the tribe of Judaea but later worship of Yahweh was to be adopted on a national scale. The Jewish religion took on its definitive form relatively late, that is after the "Babylonian captivity".

An important historical and cultural achievement of ancient Palestine are the sacred writings of the Hebrew and Judaeans peoples, in particular the various works later to be collected in the Old Testament and the Apocrypha, which include historical books, myths and legends, religious teaching and poetic writings and which are now revered as "holy writ" by adherents both of the Jewish and the Christian religions.

PERSIA

The core of the ancient Kingdom of Persia was the vast Iranian plateau situated to the east of Mesopotamia. While the central part of this plateau was made up of rather dry soil with sparse vegetation, the foothills were rich in forests, metals (gold, silver, copper, iron and lead) and marble. Taken all in all, natural conditions made possible the cultivation of cereals (rye, wheat and barley) and stockbreeding (nomadic in the east and settled in the west).

Media and Persia

During the 3rd millennium B.C. Iranian tribes from Asia penetrated the Iranian plateau, and it was after these tribes that the area was subsequently named. In some areas they conquered the local inhabitants and in others they settled peaceably alongside them, later to fuse with them.

In approximately the ninth century B.C. two large groups of Iranian tribes emerge: the Medes and the Persians. The Medes were to come to the fore earlier than the Persians, but little of their history is known to us and what there is is of a semi-legendary character. However, it is certain that at the end of the seventh

century B.C. Media became a powerful state and together with Babylon succeeded in dealing Assyria a crushing blow. Yet by the middle of the sixth century B.C. the Medes were compelled to submit to their neighbours, the Persians.

The founder of the Persian state was the famous military commander and statesman Cyrus (559-529 B.C.). His origins are obscured in the mists of legend, according to which, although a king's son, he was brought up as a foundling by a shepherd. During the expedition of the last Median king against Mesopotamia the Persians under Cyrus invaded Media, and after fighting which lasted for three years the country was conquered and annexed to the Persian kingdom.

Having made himself master of Media, Cyrus undertook a number of military operations. He reorganised the Persian army, making the cavalry its main striking force. In 547 B.C. Cyrus conquered Armenia and Cappadocia and then the Kingdom of Lydia in 546, seizing the tremendous riches belonging to King Croesus, whose name had already become a by-word, synonymous with a wealthy potentate. Cyrus gained control over the whole of Asia Minor including the numerous rich Greek towns situated along the littoral.

After these victories, almost the whole of Mesopotamia (apart from the south) was surrounded by countries conquered by Cyrus, which greatly strengthened his hand in the war against Babylon and in 538 B.C. the city fell to him. Cyrus then issued a manifesto in which he promised not to alter Babylonian patterns of administration, to respect the local deities and further the prosperity of the city of Babylon. This manifesto shows Cyrus to have been not merely an outstanding military commander but also a skilled statesman and diplomat.

Cyrus conducted his campaign against Palestine and Phoenicia in a similar way. Throughout he stressed the peaceful aims of this expedition: the reconstruction of the city of Jerusalem, which had been laid waste by the Babylonian conquerors, and assistance for a number of Phoenician towns. In actual fact the conquest of Palestine and Phoenicia provided Cyrus with a bridgehead, vital for the imminent war against the last remaining large power in the East at that period—Egypt. However, Cyrus himself was unable to carry out this plan since he was killed in a battle against the Massagetae on the north-eastern border of his empire.

The Formation of the Persian Power

Cyrus's military policy was continued by his son Cambyses (529-522 B.C.) who made careful preparations for war against Egypt with the aid of the Phoenician fleet. In contrast to Cyrus's



Tomb of Cyrus in Pasargadae. Late sixth century B.C.

“soft” diplomacy, Cambyses initiated a reign of terror in Egypt after he had conquered it. Nevertheless, the last major power in the East had been conquered and Persia—following in Assyria’s footsteps—had now become a world power, by the standards of those times.

Details as to the organisation of this enormous empire can be gleaned from the famous inscription of King Darius I (522-486 B.C.) on a rockface in the mountains. The whole of the Persian state was divided up into a series of satrapies and as a rule each of the countries conquered by the Persians constituted a separate satrapy (Egypt, Babylonia, Lydia, etc.). The rulers of these satrapies, the satraps, were appointed by the king himself; they were directly responsible to him and held full juridical and administrative powers.

All satrapies were obliged to pay taxes in money and in kind. For example, Egypt had to supply wheat sufficient to feed 120,000 garrison troops. As a result of these taxes Darius’s treasury was able to gather in a colossal revenue.

Darius also introduced a monetary reform. For the first time in history an enormous empire consisting of many different countries came to use a uniform coinage—gold coins or “darics” which only the king had the right to mint (though the satraps were allowed to mint silver and copper coins). The introduction of the daric furthered the expansion of trade, in the interests of

which Darius's government also organised the building of roads and their effective guarding. Persia during that period had a fine system of roads, with inns and post-stations at intervals of 15 miles. Apart from their importance for trade these roads naturally also had a great strategic significance.

Darius also introduced military reforms. Permanent military garrisons were set up in the various satrapies and the whole state was divided up into five military zones which did not coincide with the satrapy borders. The commanders of the military zones were directly responsible to the king.

Such was the structure of the state during the reign of King Darius. The Persians themselves occupied a dominant position in the country. They both served in the army and worked as tillers of the land and stockbreeders. They were free from all taxes and labour conscription, to which all the conquered peoples were subject. Yet in the long run the Persian state also proved to be a clay-legged colossus like Assyria before it: it was able to survive as a result of its military strength alone, while firm economic and political ties between the various component states were fatally lacking. This lack of inner cohesion was to make itself felt much more when the Persians came up against a more serious enemy—the Greeks.

The Religion and Culture of Persia

As in all other countries of the East at that period religion also played an important part in the life of Iranian society. The ancient Iranian religion involved nature (for example the mountains) and animal worship. Later worship of the Persian tribal god Ahura Mazda and the Sun-god Mithras became widespread. It is commonly held that Zoroastrianism (which takes its name from the legendary prophet Zoroaster) made its appearance during the reign of Darius; an essential feature of this religion was the concept of a universal struggle between the principles of good and evil, light and darkness.

There was little that was genuinely original about Iranian culture, and virtually no literature has survived. Egypt and Assyria both exerted a strong influence on Iranian architecture. The Persians had taken their writing from Babylonia, although later they were to evolve an alphabet on the basis of this cuneiform script. This absence of important original cultural achievements can be explained by the military nature of the state itself and its lack of homogeneity.

Chapter Three

THE ANCIENT CIVILISATIONS OF INDIA AND CHINA

INDIA

Natural Conditions

Natural conditions in ancient India were extremely varied due to the enormous size of the country. It is therefore best to divide the country into two parts—the northern (or the basin of the Ganges and Indus rivers) and the southern. Natural conditions in northern India were more or less uniform and similar to those of Egypt or Babylonia, in that the fertility of the soil depended to a large extent on the flooding of the Indus and the Ganges. The soil of southern India was less fertile, but this part of the country was well forested, and rich in precious metals and stones (gold, diamonds, etc.). An important feature of India was her geographic isolation: the country was cut off from the surrounding world by the high Himalaya mountains, and by the sea. The original tribes inhabiting the country are generally referred to as the Dravidians and the earliest period of Indian history is usually known as the Dravidian period.

Early Indian History

The culture and level of development of the Dravidian tribes corresponds roughly to that of Sumero-Akkadian society. The population engaged in cultivation on irrigated lands and stock-breeding. The most common grain crops were wheat and barley, and domesticated animals included sheep, pigs and buffalo. Camels and elephants were also tamed from early on.

During the Dravidian period there already existed important towns with broad straight streets and two-storied houses such as Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro, discovered through excavation. The houses were built of burnt red brick. In Mohenjo-Daro remains

of water-supply and drainage systems were found and much evidence of it having been a major trading and craft centre.

The ruins of the large palaces in Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa, which were obviously kings' palaces, testify to the existence of state power in Dravidian society. However, at that time India was not a united kingdom but divided up into a series of small kingdoms and principalities. Judging by the quarters inhabited by the nobility and the poor quarters, social differences based on property and an embryonic form of class society had already emerged. The existence of writing also testifies to a fairly advanced level of development.

The Aryan Conquest

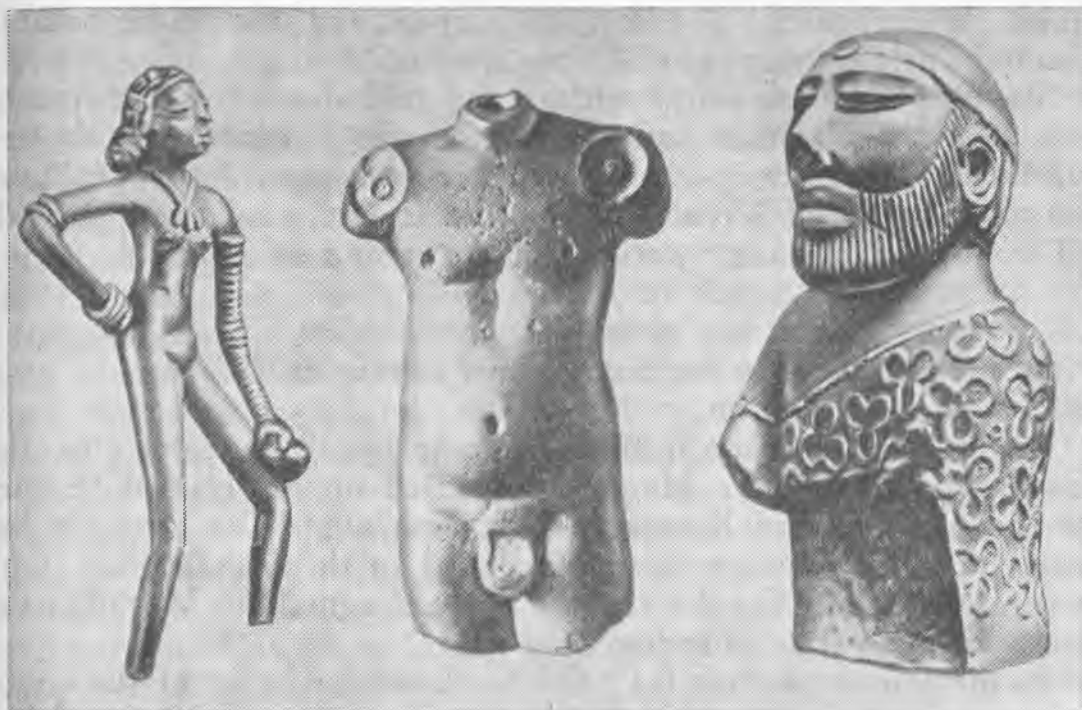
During the first half of the 2nd millennium Aryan tribes invaded northern India from the Central Asian steppes.

The Aryans were far less advanced economically and culturally than the Dravidians. There were nine Aryan tribes the most important of which was the Bharata tribe. The leader of each tribe was called a Rajah and a group of tribes was ruled over by a Maharajah.

The Aryans were nomadic pastoralists. Their main source of wealth was their cattle, and cows were used as a means of exchange since money did not yet exist. However, the Aryans who invaded India soon assimilated the superior Dravidian culture and started to engage in settled agriculture. Some of the Dravidian population were wiped out and others were reduced to slavery or servitude and were treated with extreme cruelty and contempt.

During the 1st millennium the Aryans penetrated as far as the southern regions of India, conquering the local population as they went. The strange relations existing between the native population and the conquering Aryans lie at the root of the caste system which then began to develop. The whole of the population of India was divided up into four castes. The highest caste was that of the priests, the Brahmins, then came the Kshatriya or warrior caste, the Vaisya—commune peasants, craftsmen and traders and lastly the Sudra—hired workmen, peasants and slaves. The barriers between the various castes were quite unsurmountable, for example, inter-caste marriage was forbidden or at least not regarded as legal: children from inter-caste marriages were regarded as unclean and relegated to the lower castes.

The most privileged caste was that of the priests—Brahmins—who were freed from all types of taxation, conscription and corporal punishment. According to the laws of ancient India a nine-



Bronze and stone sculptures from Harappa

year-old member of the Brahmin caste was considered as a father in relation to a ninety-year-old member of the Kshatriya. In peace-time the Kshatriya caste led a relatively undisturbed existence and received rich gifts and favours from the kings, but in time of war they were the only section of the population required to fight. The Vaisya caste had to pay taxes into the state treasury: commune peasants up to one-sixth of their harvest and merchants up to a fifth of their income. However, they were exempt from military service. Most wretched of all was the position of the Sudra caste. Members of this caste had no rights whatever, but merely obligations. Members of higher castes only had to pay a fine for the murder of a Sudra, the same as for killing a dog. The Sudra caste, however, was divided into various groups. The most unfortunate sub-group of all were the so-called pariahs, the descendants of the Dravidians, who were considered untouchable.

Another distinctive feature of the ancient civilisation of India apart from the caste system was the unchanging nature of the village communes over many centuries. Although there existed family plots within the communes and therefore private land-ownership, in the main the communes were run as a natural economy. The structure of the communes and their self-government always followed one and the same pattern: each commune had its elder, clerks, who took charge of the farming, a black-

smith, a carpenter, a potter, a barber and the indispensable Brahmin priest.

Slavery, although fairly widespread in India, was as a rule of a domestic, patriarchal variety. Aryans who fell into debt slavery were only bound temporarily and therefore even marriages were permitted between Aryan slaves and free men or women, provided of course that they were members of the same caste.

India in the Sixth-Third Centuries B.C.

In the sixth century India was made up of several states, the largest of which were Magadha, situated on the central reaches of the Ganges, and Kosala to the north-west. The struggle between these two states came to an end in the fifth century with a decisive victory for the king of Magadha, making Magadha the most powerful state in India.

In the fourth century B.C. the north-western part of the country was conquered by Alexander the Great (more details of this famous campaign will follow in a subsequent chapter) after which Greek and Macedonian garrisons were set up in a number of towns. Contact between the conquerors and the local population led to mutual influences in Greek and Indian culture.

After Alexander's withdrawal from India a liberation movement grew up under the leadership of Chandragupta Maurya (322-297), whose origins are veiled in legend. According to one version he belonged to the Kshatriya caste and according to another to the Sudra caste. Most probably he succeeded in gaining power as a result of a large-scale revolt or uprising.

Chandragupta founded a powerful state, after waging war against one of Alexander's military commanders and successors Seleucus Nicator, whom he compelled to surrender to him a large part of his territory (Aria, Arachosia, etc.). However, the state founded by Chandragupta was to become even greater during the reign of his grandson, Asoka (273-232 B.C.). After conquering the Kingdom of Kalinga he succeeded in uniting almost the whole of India under his rule. Asoka was also renowned for the extensive architectural projects he commissioned and his patronage of trade. He sought his main source of support among the Vaisya caste and opposed the Brahmins, dealing a severe blow to their domination and authority by making Buddhism the state religion.

Soon after the death of Asoka the Indian state again broke up and then in approximately 100 B.C. the Scythians or Sacae invaded India from the north and set up an Indo-Scythian state.

Ancient Religion and Culture in India

The basic dogma lying at the foundation of Brahmanism was the belief in the three gods—Brahma, the creator of the world, Vishnu, the God of Good, and Shiva, the God of Evil, who together made up the great triad (trimurti). The development of this religion was closely linked up with the consolidation of the caste of Brahmin priests, who alone were entitled to interpret the holy books or Vedas. The ritual practices of the religion were very complicated and laid down such minute details as the required gait and length of hair for the faithful.

In the sixth century B.C. another religious trend was to make its appearance—Buddhism. The founder of this school was Gautama Buddha or Shakya Muni who was opposed to the religious monopoly of the Brahmins and sought to abolish inequality based on caste, at least in so far as the individual's spiritual life was concerned. Buddha also preached non-resistance to evil, abstinence and renunciation of all selfish desires as essential for attaining Nirvana, or loss of individuality by merging with the universal life. As we have already noted, Buddhism was declared the state religion under King Asoka in the third century B.C.

India's ancient civilisation was very advanced. As early as the third century B.C. there already existed several syllabic scripts. Outstanding works of epic poetry have survived, such as the famous *Mahabharata* (an account of the strife between the sons of Bharata) and the *Ramayana* (a description of the exploits of the legendary hero Rama). Ancient Indian architecture is also quite remarkable, for example the incredible Buddhist temples cut into rockfaces, works which abound in curved lines and geometrical patterns.

The ancient Indians were also familiar with the basic principles of mathematics, astronomy and medicine. A calendar was developed which divided the year into twelve months of thirty days, and allowing for an additional month at the end of every five years. Medical treatises have been preserved to this day which bear witness to a knowledge of the principles of anatomy and of the ability to make use of various medicinal herbs.

ANCIENT CHINA

Natural Conditions

China differs from the countries of the Middle East even more than India as regards natural conditions. China can be divided into three clearly defined regions: 1) the valley of the Yellow

River or the great plain of China; 2) Central China consisting of mountain regions and the Yangtze valley; 3) mountainous Southern China.

The annual flood of the Yellow River makes the Chinese plain extremely fertile. The soil of Central and particularly Southern China is much less so, but these regions are rich in mineral resources (copper, tin and lead) and valuable stone such as nephrite. The population of ancient China was extremely heterogenous.

China in Earliest Times

The earliest period of Chinese history is referred to as Shang-Yin period (1765-1122 B.C.). The unification of Chinese tribes in the Yellow River basin in the interests of waging a common struggle against the northern nomads, the Hsiung Nu, and developing the existing irrigation system resulted in a brilliant sedentary culture and later a whole state. The tribes who were the chief instigators of this unification were the Yin and the state which they set up was called the Shang, after the dynasty.

Excavations carried out in the nineteen thirties on the territory of the Shang-Yin state revealed the remains of an ancient town, with a royal palace, a temple, houses and workshops. More than 300 tombs were unearthed, four of them indisputably royal burials which contained an enormous quantity of gold, nephrite and mother-of-pearl ornaments.

The chief occupation in the Shang-Yin state was the cultivation of cereals (barley, millet and wheat) and later rice. It was for the rice fields that the first primitive irrigation devices were evolved. Work tools of this period were also primitive in the extreme: hoes and wooden ploughs were all that were used. However, at this early period the Chinese had started to grow mulberry trees and make silk. The technique of silk making was kept a strict secret, the betrayal of which was punishable by death. As a result the Chinese succeeded in keeping this secret to themselves for almost 2,500 years before it eventually spread to Japan and Iran. Other occupations were cattle-breeding for meat (but not for milk since the Chinese never drank it) and fishing.

Various crafts were well developed: woodwork (bows, arrows, chariots, boats), stonework and pottery. Excavations have also revealed evidence of primitive bronze-working. Trade was already practised at this time and developing steadily, but still took the form of primitive barter in kind.

The king's power still retained patriarchal features, since he was assisted by a council of clan or tribal elders, and combined the functions of military leader and high priest.

In Yin society a clearly defined property hierarchy existed and a hereditary nobility, in whose hands were concentrated the land and the slaves. Slavery was of a patriarchal variety. The vast mass of the population was made up of peasants living in communes. A written language was developed at this early period. The characters were evolved from primitive picture-writing and the script was extremely complicated: about 3,000 characters of this ancient script have been identified.

In the twelfth century B.C. long and bitter hostilities with the Chou tribes began and the latter eventually succeeded in capturing the Shang capital (1124) and setting up their own state.

The Chou and Ch'in Dynasties

Under the Chou dynasty (1122-771 B.C.) a centralised Chinese state grew up. The kings started to be revered as gods (the kings had titles such as son of the heavens and deputy of the heavens) and the special office of King's Grand Chancellor was inaugurated. Serving under him there were three elders in charge of the three main branches of state affairs: finance, military matters and social administration, the latter mainly involving the organisation of irrigation works. The number of administrative divisions was to grow gradually and eventually included commissions to supervise the royal house and treasury, the court of justice, and the worship of the king's ancestors.

The mass of the population was meanwhile subjected to increasingly severe exploitation. The peasants were obliged to pay a tenth of their harvest in taxes. This intolerable state of affairs led to an uprising in 842 B.C. and the king's fall from power. Soon after this the centralised Chou state was to be divided up into a number of independent princedoms.

In the seventh century B.C. five states emerged in China that were continually warring among themselves. From the fifth to the third century B.C. the fighting was so fierce that the whole period came to be known as Chan Kuo, "the contending states". The fourth century saw the rise of the Ch'in principality. For over a hundred years the Ch'in princes were to fight for supremacy throughout China.

The apogee of the Ch'in dynasty was the reign of Shih Huang Ti, "First Emperor of the Ch'in Dynasty" (246-210 B.C.).

This emperor succeeded in conquering the remaining Chinese principalities and also part of Manchuria and Mongolia. During his reign the country was divided into 36 commanderies and a large administrative apparatus was set up. The irrigation network was extended and a number of highroads was built. Shih

Huang Ti reorganised the army so that the cavalry became its main striking force. A number of economic and cultural reforms were also introduced, including a unified system of weights and measures and a standardised and somewhat simplified hieroglyphic script. Work was also begun on the building of the Great Wall of China in order to defend the empire against attacks from neighbouring nomads.

However, the despotic nature of the regime set up by Shih Huang Ti was to call forth discontent amongst a wide section of the population. This discontent was fanned by the adherents of the religious and philosophical school of Confucius who, basing themselves on various historical books and documents, stressed the positive merits of earlier dynasties in contrast to the existing one. The repressive measure taken against the followers of Confucius was cruel in the extreme: 460 Confucian scholars were buried alive and all historical writings burnt. However, soon after the death of Shih Huang Ti the Ch'in dynasty was overthrown.

The Han Dynasty

The rule of the early Hans (206 B.C.-220 A.D.) was somewhat less despotic: the death penalty was applied less generously, taxes were reduced to a thirtieth of a man's income and freedom was restored to those who had sold themselves into slavery. The rulers of the Han dynasty renounced the title Huang Ti and Confucianism was declared the state religion.

During the reign of Wu Ti (140-87 B.C.) many large estates were set up and the landowners made use of the labour of free lease-holders and slaves. A number of measures were introduced to encourage the development of trade and crafts. This can be inferred from the increased scale of the production and export of silk, china, ivory and horn work.

Wu Ti led several military expeditions against Eastern Turkestan and Ferghana. The first trade routes to Rome were established leading across Sogdia and Parthia. From Central Asia the Chinese brought back vines, walnut trees and various vegetables which they began to cultivate at home.

By the beginning of the first century A.D. China was racked by mounting class conflict.

In the year 8 A.D., the regent Wang Mang deposed the child emperor, took over the reins of power and proceeded to introduce a series of interesting reforms. For example, he declared that all land was state property, forbade its sale and purchase and laid down a fixed limit for the landed estates of the rich and the aristocracy, confiscating all surplus land. Slaves were also declared



Ancient Chinese sacrificial vessels dating from the late 2nd and early 1st millennia B.C. From left to right: stone vessel, bronze wine-pot, bronze meat-pot

state property. In addition he introduced a state monopoly of iron, salt and wine and attempted to lay down a set market price for basic necessities. These reforms were met with violent opposition on the part of the wealthy and the aristocracy. Quite apart from anything else these plans were pure Utopia since private ownership of land had already taken firm root.

In the year 18 A.D. a wide-scale peasant uprising under the leadership of Fang Chung, known as the "uprising of the red brows" (the distinctive characteristic of the participants) began in Northern China. The peasants gained a victory over Wang Mang's troops in 25 A.D., but soon afterwards the movement was to change in character: the ranks of the peasants were swelled by detachments led by representatives of the aristocracy and used to restore the Han dynasty.

The rulers of the Later Han dynasty spared no effort to consolidate centralised power and restore the country's economy which had been severely undermined in the course of the struggle against Wang Mang's reforms. However, the contradictions existing between the big landowners and farmers on the one hand and the lease-holders and slaves on the other became more and more acute. The old society based on the principles of slave-ownership suffered a major crisis and as a result the forms of labour exploitation changed: slaves were given land and allowed to cultivate their own plots, while at the same time the gradual emancipation of the free lease-holders began.

In the year 184 A.D. a peasant uprising broke out and assumed enormous proportions. "The rising of the yellow headbands", as it was called, led by Juang Shao and his brothers, had as its

main slogan a call for universal equality. The insurgent army numbered several hundred thousand and a bitter struggle lasted for twenty-five years. Although the uprising was eventually crushed, the empire broke up and China was once again divided into a number of separate kingdoms.

Religion and Culture of Ancient China

The early religion practised in China was linked with nature worship, in particular worship of the earth and mountains, but religious concepts gradually became more complex. Confucianism was to take root during the sixth and fifth centuries B.C. The founder of this religion Confucius had been a high official at a prince's court. Loyalty to tradition and the ways of the ancients and mistrust of all innovation were the most characteristic features of his religious and philosophical teaching. Confucius idealised the patriarchal monarchy and the moral code of the patriarchal family. He attributed tremendous importance to moral education and called for moderation and the individual's acceptance of his lot. Typical Confucian maxims include the following: "To keep to the middle path is to uphold virtue", "Fathers shall always be fathers, sons shall always be sons and wangs wangs", "Insubordination of the common people is the root of all disorder".

In addition to Confucianism another religious and philosophical system also took root in China, that of Taoism, and in the first century Buddhism started to spread from India.

Science and philosophy were highly developed in ancient China. Another philosopher worthy of note is Wang Chung (first century A.D.) who upheld various materialist principles (inter alia he denied the immortality of the soul). Important advances were made in astronomy: maps of the heavens were charted and eclipses and the appearance of comets were forecast. Chinese mathematicians established the properties of the right angle triangle. Geographical and agronomical treatises of interest have also come down to us. The ancient Chinese also invented gun-powder, paper, the compass and the seismograph.

The most famous of the classical Chinese historians was Ssu-ma Ch'ien (writing about 100 B.C.), author of the monumental *Historian's Records*; literary works of these times which have come down to us include: Shih Ching (the Classic of Songs)—a collection of ritual hymns and folk songs, Shu Ching (Classic of Documents)—speeches, instructions and exhortations of the ancient emperors, and Ch'un Ch'iu (Springs and Autumns)—a work attributed to Confucius, a chronicle of his native state of Lu.

Finally, mention should be made of the remarkable achievements of ancient China in art and crafts in the medium of china, bronze, wood and ivory.

Chapter Four

PRE-CLASSICAL GREECE

Natural Conditions

Ancient Greece occupied the southern part of the Balkan peninsula, a mountainous country with scant rainfall and infertile soil, bordered by an extremely rugged coastline. Only in isolated areas such as Laconia and Messenia in the south, Boeotia in central Greece and Thessaly in the north are fertile plains to be found which are suitable for agriculture.

Rivers and their tributaries, which played such an important part in the early history of the countries of the East, are of no particular significance in Greek history since there is not a single large river in the whole of the Balkan peninsula. On the other hand, the sea was of tremendous importance in the development of Greek society. As a result of the jagged coastline, the large number of sheltered bays and harbours, the proximity of Asia Minor and the islands in the Aegean Sea providing as it were stepping stones between the Greek mainland and the coast of Asia Minor, sea-faring and trade developed in Greece very early on. Greek sailors could voyage to the Black Sea or Asia Minor without losing sight of land.

Ancient Greece was rich in minerals: iron in Laconia, silver in Attica (central Greece), gold in Thrace (on the northern shore of the Aegean). In addition there was an abundance of clay, building stone and marble.

The infertile soil, and hence a constant grain shortage on the one hand, and an abundance of minerals on the other, stimulated the development of trade and various techniques for fashioning metal and stone, and building skills.

Important Archaeological Discoveries

The early history of Greece until almost the end of the last century could be gleaned only from myths and legends and the famous epic of the *Iliad*, attributed to the blind poet Homer,



The Lion Gate at Mycenae

which tells of the war between the Greeks and the city of Troy in Asia Minor. This material was long regarded by scholars as purely fictitious.

However, the factual basis of the legends was unexpectedly confirmed in the 1870s, when Heinrich Schliemann, a self-taught German archaeologist and passionate enthusiast, started excavating the area purported to be the site of Troy. His efforts were crowned with dazzling success: he succeeded in unearthing city walls, the ruins of various buildings, numerous utensils and articles of jewelry. After his discovery of Troy Schliemann then went on to undertake excavation work on the Greek mainland at the sites of the ancient cities of Mycenae and Tiryns, with equal success.

At the beginning of this century the English archaeologist Arthur Evans started excavation work on the island of Crete, also frequently mentioned in ancient Greek myths and legends. At the town of Knossos he unearthed an enormous palace, complete with throne rooms, labyrinthine corridors, a water system and bath chambers. The walls of the central hall were decorated with intricate frescoes. All these features bore witness to the highly developed engineering techniques and culture of the Cretans during the 3rd and 2nd millennia B.C.

Yet probably the most remarkable of all the archaeological finds at Knossos was an archive containing hundreds of clay tablets

covered with a mysterious unknown script. For a long time all attempts to decipher this script met with failure. Scholars came to the conclusion that the Knossos tablets bore writing in two different scripts and probably two different languages. These two scripts were referred to as linear A and B and in 1953 the young English scholar Michael Ventris announced his method for deciphering the linear B script, which at the present time is recognised by the majority of scholars. According to Ventris, the language of linear B is an early Greek dialect. Thanks to archaeological discoveries and the deciphering of this script it is now possible to gain a general picture of the history of Ancient or Achaean Greece.

Achaean (Mycenaean) Greece

By approximately the seventeenth century B.C. the ancient Greek or Achaean states of the Peloponnesus had reached a high level of economic and cultural development. The largest of these city-states were Mycenae and Tiryns in Argolis, and Pylos in Messenia.

At Mycenae and Tiryns ruins of the one-time impregnable fortified palaces survive to this day. Remains of implements and utensils made of both pottery and metal, and jewelry found during excavations show highly developed craftsmanship. From documents written in linear B found during excavation work at Pylos we learn that slavery was practised in Achaean Greece.

The Achaean states on the Greek mainland were at their height between the fifteenth and thirteenth centuries B.C. The Achaean Greeks held sway not only throughout the southern part of the Balkan peninsula but also on a number of islands in the Aegean, including Crete. They carried on lively trade with Cyprus, Egypt and Phoenicia. At the end of the thirteenth century and beginning of the twelfth a number of Achaean states under the leadership of the king of Mycenae (known traditionally as Agamemnon) undertook what for those times represented a formidable enterprise, a campaign against the city-state of Troy.

However the heyday of the Achaean states was destined to be of comparatively short duration. By the end of the thirteenth century B.C. Dorian tribes had begun to invade Greece from the north. This invasion appears to have been not so much a direct conquest as a lengthy process of infiltration consisting of wave after wave of increasingly fierce attacks. The centres of Achaean culture were destroyed, and the people were either killed or taken into captivity, as the invaders gradually conquered Thessaly, then the Peloponnesus and finally the subject islands. Thus

the highly developed Achaean civilisation perished. The devastated towns were gradually covered over and the scientific and artistic achievements of their inhabitants were condemned to oblivion.

Homeric Greece (the Dark Age)

The period of Greek history stretching from the twelfth to the eighth century is often referred to as the Homeric period, for the events and way of life of Greek society described in the famous epics, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, which the Greeks attributed to the pen of Homer, all belong to this particular period. Homeric society developed after the Dorian conquest and the fall of the Achaean civilisation and represented a step back in many ways from the preceding age. From the works of Homer we learn that in the Greece of that period a natural economy was practised. The people were engaged mainly in cultivation and stockbreeding. The old trade links had collapsed and trade had decayed and was based first and foremost on primitive barter.

Social relations were patriarchal and retained many relics of primitive society on the clan pattern. The hereditary nobility played a very important role in this society, as the section of the population owning the best lands, and its members are referred to as the "richly endowed" in Homer's works. Side by side with them there lived the peasants who either owned small allotments of poor land or no land at all. The landless peasants were virtually nothing more than farm labourers. Slavery was also of a patriarchal variety. Slaves were few and mainly employed for household duties.

Each tribe had a leader or basileus, who led his tribe in battle and also fulfilled the functions of supreme judge and high priest. His power was limited to some extent by a council of elders, which incorporated the heads of all the noble families. The tribal leader was obliged to deliberate with them when matters of extreme importance were being discussed. In Homer's poems mention is made of a popular assembly but obviously it did not play an important part at that period.

Archaic Greece

The period from the eighth to the sixth century B.C. is marked by important economic and social advances. This was a time of momentous discoveries and technical innovations. Wide use was made of iron and skill in fashioning it grew apace: soldering was

first developed on the island of Chios and casting on the island of Samos. Weaving (mainly in the town of Megara), pottery and stonework (mainly in Athens) also developed widely. A new variety of trades and professions grew up. Trade links were re-established, especially those with the Phoenicians from whom the Greeks adopted various religious practices and later an alphabet (their earlier one having been forgotten after the Dorian invasion). As a result of the growth of trade a monetary system evolved and the Greeks soon started to mint metal coins.

The development of crafts and their separation from agriculture combined with the growth of trade led to the growth of various economic (and political) centres, and of real townships. Although towns were mentioned in Homer's poems, in fact these were little more than fortified settlements. Gradually, owing to various factors, these tribal settlements started to amalgamate and turn into larger centres, for example Athens in Attica (central Greece), Sparta (in Laconia), and Corinth (on the isthmus connecting the Peloponnesus with the rest of the peninsula). The distinctive feature of these Greek towns was the fact that each of them became not merely an economic but also a political centre, constituting the focal point of the social life of a whole region. Thus each Greek town resembled a small independent state. They were known as *poleis*, or city-states. In ancient times Greece never constituted a united centralised state but always consisted of a number of these city-states, which not only led completely separate existences but frequently warred among themselves.

Parallel to this process on the mainland, intensive colonisation was being carried on, and this period of Greek history (eighth-sixth centuries B.C.) is sometimes known as the era of Greek colonisation.

The word "colony" at that period implied a settlement of Greeks in a foreign country. Colonies were set up by individual *poleis* and they remained completely independent of the polis which originally set them up (i.e., from the mother city or "metropolis"). Each colony had its own separate constitution, citizenship, laws, courts and coinage. Colonies were set up for a variety of different reasons: sometimes as a result of the development of trade when they served as trading posts; sometimes because a certain polis was overpopulated and part of the population set off in search of better lands; sometimes as a result of political conflict. Thus, where a democracy was established, the aristocrats (representatives of the patriarchal nobility) might be banished and settling in a foreign land proceed to found their own polis. Or again democratic sections of the population might be banished by the aristocratic leaders.

From the eighth to the sixth century the three main centres of Greek colonisation were: 1) the coast of Asia Minor and the islands in the Aegean Sea (Ephesus, Miletus, Halicarnassus, the islands of Samos and Rhodes, etc.); 2) the western Mediterranean (southern Italy and Sicily; Massilia in Gaul, Saguntum in Hispania), and 3) the eastern straits and the Black Sea coast (Byzantium, Sinope, Olbia, Chersonesus, Panticapaeum, etc.). Many of these colonies developed into large independent centres, flourishing city-states which in their turn founded colonies of their own. In this way between the eighth and sixth centuries Greek poleis spread across the whole of the Aegean area and along the Mediterranean and Black Sea coasts.

Ancient Sparta

Sparta was situated in the fertile valley of the Eurotas river between ranges of mountains leading in a north-south direction across Laconia. The ancient population of Sparta were most probably Achaean peoples who had been conquered by the invading Dorian tribes. We know little of the early history of Sparta. Many of the interesting customs and laws which existed there at early periods and later and have been handed down to us, are attributed to the legendary law-giver Lycurgus, for example the division of the territory of Laconia into 39,000 estates, the suppression of gold and silver coins (in Sparta only iron money was used).

The whole of the population of Laconia was divided into three groups. The first and most privileged were the Spartans, descendants of the Dorian conquerors, who referred to themselves as "the commune of equals". The Spartans owned all the land, which was divided up into approximately equal estates, but they themselves did not work it. They made up ten per cent of the population and lived in the city of Sparta, enjoying full political and civil rights.

The second group was that of the perioeci (those living around Sparta) who were descended from subject or immigrant peoples. This group enjoyed personal freedom but no political rights. The majority of the perioeci worked as artisans.

Finally the third and largest group were the helots—descendants of subject and enslaved Achaeans. The helots were attached to landed estates, which they worked, being obliged at the same time to pay quit-rent to their Spartan absentee landlords. The helots had no rights whatsoever and were virtually deprived of their personal freedom. Nevertheless the Spartans lived in continual fear of the helots and the eventuality of an uprising among

them, and from time to time punitive expeditions were organised against them which led to mass slaughters.

Sparta had its own special constitution. The "commune of equals" was ruled by two kings and a *gerousia* or council of elders, made up of representatives of the noble families (none of whom were younger than 60). The *gerousia* supervised state affairs and also acted as the main organ of justice. There was also an *apella* or assembly of citizens, which however was convened infrequently, for the election of important officers or for the deliberation of questions of war and peace. An interesting institution was the ephoralty, an elective collegium of five members, which was in effect the supreme organ of power, to which even the kings were accountable.

The Spartans' everyday life and customs were all directed to one end—military training. From the age of seven children were sent to state lyceums where courage, initiative and endurance were fostered in them and where the accent was on physical training. From the age of 20 every young Spartan was liable for military service and his life from then on was one of military subordination—communal meals, frugal in the extreme, regular physical and military training, conversations with the elders at public gatherings, at which the young Spartans were expected to converse concisely and with an accurate choice of words—hence the word "laconic".

Such customs and rules enabled the Spartans to build up a remarkable army which for a long period was considered invincible. In the south of Greece Sparta conquered Messenia, part of Argolis and concluded a military alliance with a number of other poleis. This alliance was called the Peloponnesian League and Sparta was its acknowledged figure-head and leader.

The State of Athens

The town of Athens grew up in Attica (central Greece) in a mountainous, infertile region. The soil of this area required very thorough, painstaking cultivation and the main crops were thus fruit and vegetables, olives and vines being two of the most important. Attica could not grow enough corn and had to import it. The indented coastline of Attica led to the rapid development of sea-faring and trade.

In ancient times Attica was ruled over by a king but our knowledge of this period of Athenian history is fragmentary and based mainly on legends. The Athens of classical times was a republic, at first of a distinctly aristocratic type. The aristocratic council or the Areopagus took the place of a council of elders and consti-

tuted the leading state organ. Those occupying the leading state posts were called archons, nine of which were appointed annually from among representatives of the leading rich aristocratic families by the Areopagus. At this period the citizens' assembly played no significant role.

The free population of Athens consisted of three groups. The privileged stratum of society was the hereditary aristocracy, the class of the Eupatridae, who enjoyed full political and civil rights. The bulk of the population was known as the demos or people, a term including farmers, artisans, traders, sailors, etc., and covering a wide range of occupations and levels of material well-being from the poor peasants to the prosperous traders and manufacturers. The demos enjoyed civil rights, but hardly any political ones. The third and last group was made up of the so-called metics or foreigners, settled in Athens, engaged for the most part in trade or manufacture. The metics were not granted any civil or political rights. The slaves of course represented a category of their own, being completely without rights and considered as animals or livestock rather than people.

Political contradictions in the Athenian state structure made themselves felt early on and a bitter political struggle developed, a struggle waged by the poor peasants for their rights to freedom and the land, in particular against the practice of debt slavery. Strife also developed between the demos and the Eupatridae, as the richer strata of the demos sought to gain the same political rights and privileges as those enjoyed by the aristocracy.

The Reforms of Solon and Cleisthenes

This political battle reached its height at the end of the seventh and beginning of the sixth century B.C., aggravated as it was by plague epidemics, bad harvests and setbacks in the war for the island of Salamis. In 594 Solon was elected archon and he proceeded to introduce a series of bold revolutionary reforms. In the first place he abolished all existing debts, freed all debt slaves and prohibited this practice in the future. Then he introduced a new constitution, which divided all Athenian citizens into four classes, depending on the size of their landed property or the income which they drew from it. From then on it was not noble blood but property and wealth which was required for membership of the privileged class. Political privileges were also made subject to property.

Under Solon a new elective organ was also set up—the Council of 400, which was gradually to oust the Areopagus. The assembly of citizens also started to assume a much more important

role in state affairs, since it was given the last voice in decisions taken on all important problems of state. The reforms introduced by Solon served to consolidate the political position of the upper strata of the demos and thus led to a general democratisation of the Athenian state.

These democratic reforms were improved on still further by Cleisthenes (510-509 B.C.) who abolished many vestiges of the former clan society, by introducing a new territorial division of Attica. The distribution of state posts and military service obligations were reorganised in accordance with the new territorial divisions, which ruled out any possibility of the predominance of the hereditary nobility. Cleisthenes also replaced the Council of 400 by the Council of 500 and set up an elective military collegium consisting of 10 strategoi.

Cleisthenes' reforms dealt the death blow to the political supremacy of the hereditary aristocracy and laid the foundations for still further democratisation of the Athenian state.

Chapter Five

GREECE IN THE FIFTH AND FOURTH CENTURIES B.C. THE CRISIS IN GREEK SOCIETY

The wars with Persia marked an important turning point in the history of classical Greece. These wars resulted from the fact that Persia, which as far back as the time of Cyrus had held sway over the rich Greek towns on the coast of Asia Minor, was aspiring to capture the city-states on the Greek mainland.

In 500 B.C. one of the largest Greek towns in Asia Minor, Miletus, rose up against Persian rule and the remaining Greek towns in Asia Minor then followed suit. In their search for outside help in the struggle against the vast Persian Empire the insurgent towns turned to the mainland cities for help. The only Greek states to respond to this request were Athens, which sent 20 ships, and Eretria, a small town on the island of Euboea which was only able to send 5 ships. Such help was very limited and insufficient, but after quelling the uprising the Persian King Darius used it as a pretext for declaring war against the Greek mainland states.

The Battle of Marathon

Darius sent envoys to the Greek city-states who in the name of the "Great King, the King of Kings" demanded "earth and water", tokens of complete submission. The majority of the Greek city-states feeling themselves unable to stand up to Persian attack complied with this demand. Only two states gave the envoys a different reception: in Athens they were killed and in Sparta they were thrown into a deep well, where they were told they would find sufficient earth and water.

In 492 the Persians embarked on their first expedition against Greece, which proved unsuccessful. The Persian fleet ran into a



ANCIENT GREECE OF THE CLASSICAL PERIOD

serious storm off the cape of Athos on the Chalcidice peninsula and all the troops were obliged to return home. In 490 a second expeditionary force set sail across the Aegean to the shores of Attica. The troops were disembarked on the island of Euboea where they took the town of Eretria by storm and plundered it taking the inhabitants as slaves.

The decisive battle between the Greeks and the Persians took place on the eastern shore of Attica near the town of Marathon. The Athenians had only ten thousand troops at their disposal and another 1,000 sent to their aid by the small town of Plataea. The Persian army, several times larger than that of the Greeks, nevertheless suffered a crushing defeat. The Greek troops under the old and experienced commander Miltiades who was familiar with Persian tactics, fought with rare courage and tenacity, inspired by the ideals of patriotism and freedom and devotion to their families: for every one of them it was clear that defeat meant slavery.

A messenger was sent to Athens with the joyful news. Breathing his last he ran onto the square where the old men, women and children had gathered impatiently waiting for news of the battle's outcome; he summoned up the last ounce of his strength to cry out the one word "victory" and collapsed. The marathon race in present-day Olympics takes its name from this exploit and is run over a distance roughly equal to that between Marathon and Athens.

Xerxes' Expedition

After the battle of Marathon there was a pause of 10 years before the resumption of hostilities between the Persians and the Greeks, although the peoples of both countries were well aware that a new war was inevitable. Darius' death was followed by the habitual unrest at the Persian court on such occasions. Eventually his son Xerxes succeeded him on the throne. Xerxes soon embarked on intensive preparations for a new expedition against Greece, which lasted for four years and included the erection of a bridge across the Hellespont (now known as the Dardanelles) and the construction of a canal through the narrow neck of the Chalcidice peninsula, near treacherous cape Athos.

The Greeks also made preparations. A defensive alliance was concluded between a number of Greek city-states, led by Sparta. Since Sparta was difficult of access from the sea and famed as the state with the best fighting force in the whole of Greece, they urged for the battle to be fought out on dry land rather than at sea.

The state of affairs in Athens at this time was more complicated. The rich landowners, who feared above all else that their estates would be laid waste, supported the Spartan plan of defence. Their interests were represented by the renowned statesman Aristides.

He was opposed in this plan by Themistocles who succeeded in gaining a dominant position in Athens purely as a result of his energy, ambition and outstanding abilities. When no more than a little over thirty he was elected as an archon and three years later distinguished himself at the battle of Marathon. Yet still not satisfied, he aspired after still greater fame. He admitted to his friends that "the laurels of Miltiades give me no peace".

Themistocles considered that the Greeks stood no chance of defeating the Persians on dry land. He insisted that Athens' future was as a sea power and he did all he could to build up a powerful fleet. He succeeded in setting aside the revenue from the Laurion silver mines, which were considered state property, for the building of warships. The plan for a war with Persia at sea coincided with the interests of the Athenian traders and manufacturers who did not own landed estates.

The third expedition against Greece began in the year 480 B.C. It was led by Xerxes, who by making use of Persia's subject peoples was able to amass enormous forces. Writers of classical times recorded that these forces totalled almost five million. Even if this was a considerable exaggeration it still remains certain that the Persian strength surpassed that of the Greek army many times over.

Thermopylae and Salamis

Part of the Persian army advanced overland along the coast of Thrace and part was transported in ships. The first sea battle took place off the Artemisium promontory on the northern coast of Euboea and the first land battle at Thermopylae, a narrow pass leading from Thessaly into central Greece, so narrow indeed that only one vehicle could go through it at a time. On the western side it was overhung by sheer, forbidding rocks and on the eastern side impassable swamps stretched right down to the sea. It was at this point that a holding force of Greeks took up their positions under the command of King Leonidas of Sparta.

An enormous Persian army approached Thermopylae and Xerxes was sure that he would not run into serious resistance at this point. He sent word to Leonidas demanding that he lay down his arms, but Leonidas replied in true laconic style, "Come

and take them." The first Persian attacks met with no success. Making skilful use of their position, the Greek detachments defended the pass heroically and held out against the onslaught of the enemy hordes for several days. However, a traitor from among the Greek forces led a large detachment of Persians along mountain paths to the Greeks' rear. When Leonidas saw that they were being surrounded, he sent a large part of his troops off the field remaining alone with his fellow Spartans to face the enemy. They fell to a man in this unequal struggle. Later a marble statue of a lion was set up in honour of Leonidas at the entrance to the Thermopylae pass.

While the battle of Thermopylae was in progress a sea battle was also being fought off the Artemisium promontory. The Greeks were victorious, but after the Persian army had succeeded in cutting the Thermopylae pass the fleet was compelled to withdraw to the coast of Attica.

The Spartan commanders were of the opinion that the fleet should withdraw still further, to the Corinthian isthmus, where they wished to set up—both on sea and dry land—the last line of defence. The Athenians, who had been forced to abandon their native city to be plundered and destroyed by the enemy, were adamant that the battle with the Persian fleet should take place in the narrow straits between the shores of Attica and the island of Salamis. This plan of action was upheld with especial vehemence by Themistocles, who was vindicated by subsequent events.

With the first light of dawn Xerxes gave orders for his golden throne to be placed on one of the hills overlooking the Attican shore to give him a good view of the battle. However, the outcome of the battle of Salamis was very different from what he had expected. The heavy Persian vessels had difficulty in manoeuvring in the narrow straits, while the smaller and much lighter Greek ships were easily able to ram them. The Persian ships floundered and many of Xerxes' men were drowned. Soon panic spread among the Persian troops and the ships which were still sea-worthy made a hasty retreat. The Greek fleet gained a decisive victory. As subsequent events showed the battle of Salamis was a turning point in the course of the war.

After the battle of Salamis, Xerxes was compelled to leave Greece, withdrawing a large part of his troops. However, he left behind between sixty and seventy thousand soldiers under the command of the experienced general Mardonius, and the following year (479 B.C.) two more important battles took place. According to legend they took place on the same day, one on land near the town of Plataea where Mardonius' troops were dealt a crushing defeat and the Persian army was finally driven out of

Greece, and the other at sea off the coast of Asia Minor near Cape Mycale. Soon after this victory the Greek towns in Asia Minor were freed from the Persian yoke.

However, the Persian war was to last for some years yet. From now on most of the battles were to take place at sea. Following Greek attacks, the Persians gradually withdrew from the islands of the Aegean and the coast of Asia Minor.

Thus, fighting desperately to defend their freedom and their homeland a small, courageous people achieved a brilliant victory over the mighty and once invincible Persian Empire.

The Delian League and the Rise of Athenian Economic Prosperity

The victorious conclusion of the war against Persia was of tremendous importance for the whole of Greece. But since in the last years of the struggle the most decisive battles had been fought at sea, it was natural that Athens, the state with the largest fleet, should rise to a position of ascendancy among the Greek states.

In the course of the hostilities an Athenian naval alliance had been formed. It was joined by the Greek city-states on the Aegean islands and along the coast of Asia Minor as they were gradually freed from the Persian yoke. The size of the alliance grew steadily and at its height it numbered over two hundred nomes.

To begin with all members of the alliance enjoyed absolutely equal rights. Each nome or city had one vote in the general council which convened on the island of Delos, where the common treasury was also kept. The revenue consisted of contributions from the individual members of the league, the amount of which was proportional to their size. Since the military command was in the hands of the Athenians the decisive political voice in the affairs of the league was also bound to be theirs sooner or later. The naval alliance was gradually replaced by Athenian sea power, the partners becoming subjects from whom tribute was exacted. The treasury was then transferred to Athens, Athenian officials were sent out to all the member-cities and nomes, and things went so far that any attempts to withdraw from the league were treated as revolts and cruelly put down by Athenian military might.

The setting up of the Delian League and the victory over the Persians furthered the expansion of slavery, trade and commerce in Athens. The total number of slaves was several times more than in the period before the Persian wars. There was nothing

surprising in this fact, since the bulk of the prisoners taken during the war had been turned into slaves. The slave trade also grew apace. Pirates used to capture large quantities of slaves and then sell them at the slave markets which existed in almost all sizable towns of the Athenian state. Sometimes slaves were sold by auction. They were treated like domestic animals, having to undress, show their teeth and run when being inspected by prospective buyers. Prices for slaves varied considerably: those with no qualifications were sold very cheaply, while skilled craftsmen (such as armourers) and educated slaves (such as teachers and physicians) fetched very high prices.

Slave labour was made use of above all in workshops. As a rule these were quite small, each employing about ten or twelve slaves. Large quantities of slaves were also used for the heaviest work of all—in the Laurion silver mines.

The lot of the slaves in Athens as in all other slave-holding societies was extremely hard. The slaves were deprived of all rights and were treated as chattels which could be bought or sold and which owners could treat as they pleased with impunity. As a result every free Athenian, even the poorest of peasants, looked on slaves with contempt.

The formation of the Delian League and the victory over the Persians meant that the Athenian trading ships could now sail in safety not merely to any part of the Aegean and the coast of Asia Minor but also through the Hellespont to the countries bordering on the Black Sea. Athens' trade links were expanding steadily and one of the Athenian statesmen of that time was able to remark: "All the products of the world flow into her (Athens—*Trans.*) and we enjoy the good things of other lands as easily as our own."

From Thrace and the Black Sea coast came corn, which never grew in sufficient quantities on the infertile soil of Attica. Other imports were timber, pitch, honey, leather and salt fish from the Black Sea coast; ivory from Africa, spices from the East and iron and copper from Italy. Finally there was also the living cargo of slaves imported from many lands. The main Athenian exports were olive oil, wine, metalware and pottery.

The Athenian port of the Piraeus situated a few miles from Athens became an important town in its own right with crowded streets, ringing with many languages, and its harbour always full of ships from distant lands. The port's annual turnover ran well into the millions and large trade deals were concluded there. A large variety of merchants' guilds and unions were set up. Since coinage from many different countries passed through the Piraeus, people were employed to organise the exchange of money. Gradually these simple transactions were replaced by more complex

financial deals. Individual merchants or groups of merchants were lent large sums of money at fixed rates of interest, or money changers would guarantee to hold sums in safe keeping for a certain period and make a profit on them in the meantime. Some of the Athenian money changers engaged in this kind of transaction succeeded in making large fortunes. Such, briefly, was the development of Athenian overseas trade and the financial and credit transactions bound up with it.

The Zenith of Athenian Democracy

The growth of the Athenian fleet during the Persian wars was closely bound up with the development of democracy. In Athens every citizen engaged in the ranks of the heavy infantry (which made up the hard core of the army) was obliged to provide his armour at his own expense. Since such armour was fairly expensive, only those receiving a decent income could afford it. In the fleet, on the other hand, sailors and helmsmen required no such armour and were thus mainly recruited from the ranks of the poor, the "floating mob" as they were contemptuously referred to by the noble and rich Athenians. As the fleet grew and assumed a more and more important role in the war, the influence of the demos made itself increasingly felt in the political life of the republic. As a result, the democratic reforms introduced earlier by Solon and Cleisthenes were taken one stage further.

The most outstanding political figure of this period was Pericles, the scion of an ancient noble family whose father Xanthippus had won fame as conqueror of the Persians in the famous battle off Cape Mycale. Pericles headed the Athenian democracy and for fifteen years he was universally recognised as the leader of the whole state. He was a skilled politician and brilliant orator. The people called him "the Olympian", the thunder and lightning of his oratory putting him on a par with Zeus. However, he only addressed the people on rare occasions, maintaining that each speech should be an event making a lasting impression on the minds of all who heard it.

Under Pericles the Athenian state reached the zenith of its power and prosperity. The city was embellished with magnificent works of architecture, sculpture and paintings. On the Athenian Acropolis buildings were erected which even in their ruined state today still delight the beholder with their amazing perfection of form: the famous Parthenon (the temple of Athena Parthenos), the Propylaea (the monumental gateway to the Acropolis), and the Erechtheum (a temple built in honour of the legendary Athenian King Erechtheus).

Famous scholars and philosophers opened schools in Athens and the Athenian theatre was considered the best in the whole of Greece. Pericles surrounded himself with the most outstanding figures from the world of science and art, his entourage including the philosopher Anaxagoras, the sculptor Phidias, and the playwright Euripides. Pericles dreamt of Athens becoming the "school of Hellas".

Pericles initiated a series of important democratic reforms. Election rights were increased and election by lot was introduced. Pay for state office now permitted the poor man to hold office. Later participation in the sessions of the Popular Assembly was also to be remunerated. A "theatre money" fund was established, making theatre tickets available to the poorest sections of the population. In Athens the theatre represented not merely a spectacle or entertainment but a means of political education as well.

This was the period which saw Athenian democracy at its zenith. The whole life of the state was administered by the Popular Assembly, which as the supreme organ decided the most important matters of both home and foreign policy. The Assembly was convened every tenth day. Every Athenian citizen had the right to speak and was able to put forward whatever proposals he thought fit, up to and including new laws. Pericles' reform introduced universal franchise, and general direct participation in the affairs of the state. Every citizen had the right not merely to vote for the election of new state officers, but himself to stand for election to any post.

Apart from the Popular Assembly other democratic institutions also existed in the Athenian republic, such as the *heliaea* or court of dicasts, which consisted of 6,000 members. The *heliaea* was not merely an organ of justice; it had legislative functions as well. In addition, there was the Council of 500, whose duty it was to ensure that laws which had been adopted were enforced and to keep a check on the activities of those in office. In order to avoid bribery and corruption, elections to the *heliaea* and the Council of 500 involved the casting of lots: first more candidates than the required number were chosen and then lots were cast between them. Finally, there was the board of strategoi or generals (ten in all) which was of particular importance during the time of Pericles, since he himself was elected strategos ten years running. Elections to this body did not involve the casting of lots but were by proposal of personal candidates.

Such was the republican and democratic structure of Athens at the time of Pericles. At first glance it appears an ideal model not merely for the classical period but for subsequent ages as well. The dominant role of the Popular Assembly, universal



The Parthenon—built by the architect Ictinus and the contractor Callicrates, 447-438 B.C.—as it stands today

franchise, elections by lot among selected candidates, pay for state office—what could be more democratic and just? However, if we take a closer look at the Athenian state structure one essential problem emerges. Who in fact enjoyed these democratic benefits and privileges? The whole population or only part of it, and if only part, then which part?

The slaves were deprived of all political and civil rights. Thus this section of the population—a very significant one numerically—was completely barred from enjoying the benefits of democracy. The same also applied to the metics.

This leaves only the free population, which of course was numerically much smaller than the slaves and metics put together. Yet, even they did not all participate in political life, since women were totally excluded.

Clearly, then, Athenian democracy was of a somewhat narrow and limited variety, a democracy of a privileged minority. Athe-

nian democracy was typical of that obtaining in a slave-holding society, in which rights and privileges are granted only to a particular section of the free population.

The Peloponnesian War

The Peloponnesian War was the biggest war in the history of classical Greece. It lasted for twenty-seven years (with short intervals) and led to a serious crisis in Greek society.

The main cause of the war was the rivalry between the two main groups of Greek city-states, the Athenian Empire and the Peloponnesian League. Attempts by Athens to extend her influence over certain cities of the League led to bitter Spartan resistance. The cities of Corinth and Megara in the Peloponnesian League were important trade centres, and frequently competed successfully with Athens. Political contradictions added to the rivalry, since Athens supported the democratic strata of the population throughout the whole of Greece, including the cities of the Peloponnesian League, while Sparta supported the interests of the aristocrats in all the Athenian cities. In these circumstances it was not difficult to find a suitable pretext for starting a war.

The Course of the War up to 421 B.C.

The war began in 431 B.C. when the Spartans invaded Attica. Pericles who was in command of the Athenian army decided that the Athenians should fight a defensive war on land. While the Spartan troops were laying waste the fields of Attica the people fled the countryside and sought refuge behind the fortified walls of Athens. Pericles had overlooked the fact that such an influx into the city could lead to a grave food shortage and the outbreak of various diseases and epidemics. The people protested when these disasters befell them and for the first time in fifteen years Pericles was not elected strategos. The following year he died from some epidemic, possible plague.

The reins of government then passed into the hands of representatives of the Athenian democracy who were in favour of conducting the war more vigorously. Among these one Cleon came to the fore, a master-tanner, one of the so-called leaders of the demos. He was a skilled orator, bold politician and an advocate of carrying on the war to a victorious conclusion. On his instance the Athenian fleet was sent into the attack off the coast of the Peloponnesus. In 425 B.C. the Athenians captured Pylos thus

gaining an important foothold in Messenia, and then the island of Sphacteria opposite, taking prisoner a detachment of Spartan crack troops, later to be used as hostages.

The position was extremely grave for the Spartans and they decided to transfer the main field of action to the north, to Thrace, where a number of city-states were waiting for just such an opportunity to break free of Athenian control. The Spartans sent a large part of their armed forces to Thrace under the leadership of the skilful commander Brasidas. A number of Athenian cities were captured and in 422 a large battle took place near the city of Amphipolis in the course of which both commanders, Brasidas and Cleon, fell. Soon afterwards the peace of Nicias was concluded between Athens and Sparta (intended to last for a period of 50 years) named after Nicias, the Athenian representative.

The Sicilian Expedition

However, this peace was to be no more than a temporary lull. In Athens military groupings made their appearance once more: this time the main advocate for renewing hostilities was one Alcibiades. This striking figure was a nephew of Pericles, who from the days of his youth had been renowned for his physical beauty, education and oratorical gifts. Yet at the same time he was considered, not without reason, to be an unprincipled political adventurer.

Alcibiades proposed the invasion of Sicily and also dreamt of conquering southern Italy and even Carthage. Such plans met with warm response from wide sections of the Athenian populace. In 415 preparations were started for the Sicilian expedition: a fleet consisting of 260 vessels was made ready, and an army numbering 40,000 soldiers.

However, on the eve of the fleet's departure from Athens a strange and unexpected event took place. The faces of the herms (square pillars carrying busts of Hermes, the travellers' god) which stood at crossroads in the city were found mutilated. This was interpreted as an ill omen, especially as it was rumoured that the name of Alcibiades was linked with this act of sacrilege. Nevertheless, the expedition set sail, and the Athenian forces captured the Sicilian town of Catana and then proceeded to lay siege to Syracuse. Initially, the siege was successful, but at this point a government ship arrived from Athens, demanding that Alcibiades return to face immediate trial on a charge concerning the profanation of the mysteries. Alcibiades complied with this demand but en route for Athens he managed to escape and went over to the side of the Spartans.

After Alcibiades' departure, events in Sicily took a turn for the worse. The siege of Syracuse dragged on and meanwhile a detachment of Spartan reinforcements came to the aid of the besieged. After receiving reinforcements themselves, the Athenians decided to risk a naval battle. The engagement ended in a defeat, and the Athenian forces under Nicias and Demosthenes started to withdraw inland. This withdrawal ended in complete disaster: the generals were taken prisoner and executed and seven thousand Athenians were taken as slaves and sent to work in the stone quarries.

As a result of the Sicilian disaster Athenian sea power declined and a number of large cities and islands took the opportunity to break away from Athens.

The Subsequent Course of the War

Parallel with the disastrous outcome of the Sicilian expedition Athens suffered a series of setbacks in Attica itself. In 413 B.C. Sparta made an open breach of the peace treaty, and on Alcibiades' advice used a strongly armed detachment to occupy the town of Dekeleia, a fine strategic point some fifteen miles from Athens. Instead of the former episodic raids the Spartans now started to rally their forces on the territory of Attica. As a final blow in this chain of disasters 20,000 Athenian slaves went over to the side of Sparta.

This succession of setbacks for the Athenians was seen by many as a result of the democratic form of government. In 411 B.C. the enemies of democracy took advantage of the delicate situation to carry out a revolution. Power was taken over by the Council of 400 and the democratic constitution was abolished. When rumours of this revolution reached the Athenian fleet, which was then moored off the coast of Asia Minor, the sailors mutinied and hailed Alcibiades as their commander, the latter by this time having quarrelled with Sparta. The oligarchy was overthrown and Alcibiades gained several victories over the Peloponnesian fleet, after which he returned in triumph to Athens. Soon afterwards he was elected strategos by the Popular Assembly and granted unlimited powers. However, subsequent failures and defeats of the Athenian fleet compelled Alcibiades to leave Athens once again, this time for ever.

A decisive factor during the next stage of this long, drawn-out war was the participation of Persia, which gave strong support to Sparta. Athenian power was on the wane, particularly after the crushing naval defeat in the Hellespont at the battle of Aegospotamos (Goat River) in the year 405 B.C. After defeating the

Athenian fleet, Lysander laid siege to the city of Athens itself, which was forced to surrender to him in the spring of 404. The conditions were that the whole of the Athenian fleet was to be handed over to Sparta, the famous Long Walls leading from Athens to the Piraeus were to be demolished and Sparta was to be recognised as the leading power in Hellas.

Supported by the Spartan troops, and Lysander in particular, an anti-democratic government was able to assert itself in Athens. However, the tyrannical oligarchy of the Thirty was to be short-lived, and in 403 the democratic constitution was restored.

The Results of the Peloponnesian War

Of all the states which took part in this war it was undoubtedly Athens which lost the most. The peasantry was impoverished, trade was disrupted and by the end of the war the treasury had been drained dry. Athens was no longer mistress of the seas.

Sparta also found herself in dire straits after the war. Officially she had become the leading power in the Greek world but this role proved to be beyond her capacity. By way of compensation for the help they had given Sparta, the Persians demanded the surrender of all the Greek cities of Asia Minor. Sparta not unnaturally refused to comply, and relations between the two powers deteriorated until war broke out between them in Asia Minor. After several Spartan successes, Persia formed an anti-Spartan coalition of various Greek states including Thebes, Argos, Corinth and Athens and the so-called Corinthian War started. This war ended with a peace which, while acknowledging Sparta's supremacy, laid down that the Persian king should be the supreme arbiter in Greek affairs.

Soon afterwards Sparta began to interfere in the internal affairs of Thebes, supporting as ever the local aristocracy. However, a democratic revolution took place in the town, the Spartan garrison was driven out and the Theban government concluded an alliance with Athens. This once again gave weight to Athens' power and even led to the formation of a second Athenian naval alliance. However, this alliance was of much smaller proportions than its predecessor, consisting merely of Athens and the Aegean islands, while the member-states by now possessed far greater autonomy.

War then broke out between Thebes and Sparta. The Theban commander Epaminondas, the first to employ the strategical device of "sloping ranks" (bringing the left flank further forward than the main body of the troops), gained a brilliant victory in

371 at Leuctra (not far from Thebes) over the hitherto undefeated Spartans. After this victory Epaminondas invaded the Peloponnesus but did not succeed in taking Sparta.

Thus it can be seen that the Peloponnesian War brought about an abrupt shift in the balance of power. The history of Greece in the first half of the fourth century B.C. abounds in internecine strife and numerous individual poleis strove to establish their hegemony, although all proved unable to defend or preserve it. A general upheaval affected Greek society, as was reflected in the economic decline and the interminable feuds or what a contemporary referred to as *bellum omnium contra omnes*.

Greek Culture. The Role of Athens

In the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., in particular during the time of Pericles, Athens was the chief focus of Greece's political and cultural life. This great city, of an enormous size for that age—numbering some two hundred thousand inhabitants—was a centre of intellectual ferment. At all hours of the day its streets and squares were thronged with people, for the public life took place entirely out of doors. Public activities were amazingly varied: popular assemblies, mass processions and festivals, political, philosophical and legal disputes and theatrical entertainments, etc. Every Athenian citizen participated in the affairs of the Popular Assembly, listened to legal and intellectual arguments, went to the theatre, and in all these ways took a direct part in the political and cultural life of his city.

Philosophy

One of the most outstanding achievements of the ancient Greeks in the field of culture and thought was the philosophy which they bequeathed to posterity, philosophy which contains the seeds of all subsequent philosophical concepts and systems.

The first stage in the development of early Greek philosophy was natural philosophy which appeared in the seventh and sixth centuries in the Greek cities on the coast of Asia Minor. The philosophers of this school, Thales, Anaximenes and Anaximander, strove to define the essence of the visible world and represent the first naive materialists.

An outstanding phenomenon of that age was the philosophical system devised by Heraclitus of Ephesus (c. 540-c. 480 B.C.). Those fragments of his works which have survived permit us to regard him as the first dialectical philosopher. "All things flow,"

he wrote. "You cannot step into the same river twice." Heraclitus taught the contradictory nature of existence, approaching every phenomenon as a conflict of opposites. "Justice is strife," he wrote, "and all things happen through strife and must do so."

One of the great materialist philosophers was Democritus of Thrace (fifth-fourth centuries B.C.). His basic premise was that the world consists of atoms and void. Atoms he defines as the most minute uniform particles of matter. These atoms, in his interpretation, are in motion within the void, strike against one another, and merge, and the resulting combinations give rise to all phenomena of the visible world. Democritus' views were remarkable for their logical consistency: for him everything in the universe was based on the movement of matter (material atoms).

Another outstanding Greek philosopher, Plato (427-347 B.C.), was the founder of a completely different philosophical trend—idealism. Plato was a scion of the Athenian aristocracy and this was borne out by his convictions.

To Plato the essence of the world was Ideas, by which he understood the objective content of knowledge, made up of concepts. Ideas constitute a special "ideal world" lying beyond the limits of the immobile stars. Men are capable of conceiving of this world of ideas only as a result of the fact that before entering their bodies, their souls inhabit these stars, from which vantage point they are able to behold the world of ideas. Consequently Plato's teaching contains a negative if not actually contemptuous approach to matter, which he regards as something rough and amorphous, only of value in so far as it is imbued with spirituality in the form of Ideas. This teaching was to be the cornerstone of all subsequent idealistic systems and theories.

Greek philosophy reached its zenith at the time of Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), a scholar endowed with an encyclopaedic mind who represented as it were a synthesis of the whole of classical science and philosophy.

In his philosophical system Aristotle attempted to combine the materialism of Democritus and Plato's idealism, and in this lay the weakest and most vulnerable point of his philosophy, for idealism and materialism are incompatible and mutually exclusive. Nevertheless, Aristotle expressed many valuable thoughts and tenets which proved of enormous significance for the subsequent development of philosophy. Among these is his teaching on the unity of form and content (matter). Aristotle was not merely a philosopher but an extremely versatile scholar who turned his energies to a variety of fields, such as logic, astronomy, natural sciences, problems of language and versification.

Classical Greek philosophy still retains its universal significance and represents a fundamental contribution to the treasure-house of world culture.

Historiography

History is a Greek word, a fitting tribute to the fact that it made its first appearance in Greece.

Herodotus, a native of the town of Halicarnassus on the coast of Asia Minor who lived in the fifth century B.C., is generally regarded as the "father of history". His nine-volume work generally known as *History* was mainly devoted to the Greco-Persian wars, although the author makes large digressions to include part of the history of Egypt, Persia and Scythia.

Another great historian was the Athenian Thucydides (460-395 B.C.) who wrote a memorable account of the Peloponnesian War, in which he himself had taken part. It is an outstanding piece of historical writing, providing the first examples of various devices and methods of historical criticism, and representing an attempt to furnish an impartial account of historical events.

Another outstanding Athenian historian was Xenophon (430-355 B.C.), author of a number of historical writings, of which the most famous is his *Anabasis*.

Aristotle also compiled a number of historical writings many of which have not come to us. Of those that have been preserved the most interesting is his *Politics* which provides a historical outline of the development of the Athenian state and a systematic exposition of the basic principles of the Athenian constitution. These basic works of the Greek historians laid the foundation for the subsequent development of historical science in classical times.

Literature and the Theatre

The Greeks made an equally brilliant contribution in the realm of the arts. In the theatre, poetry, the plastic arts and architecture the genius of the Greek people was to leave its mark for all time.

The theatre in Greece performed an important social function. Originally linked with religion, it later became one of the most important features of Greek political life. It was in Greece that the two main theatrical genres—comedy and tragedy—came into being and developed. They represented a synthesis of various elements—dance, pageant, and games bound up with the cult of

Dionysus, the god of wine. During the Great Dionysia, solemn processions held in honour of Dionysus, the chorus, dressed in goat skins to represent the companions of the god—satyrs (half men, half goats)—sang hymns relating numerous myths linked with Dionysus. From this custom developed the later tragedies—the actual word tragedy means “song of the goat”.

Theatrical performances originally took place on public squares but they were later held in permanent buildings. The Greek theatre consisted of an open-air amphitheatre with a round stage in the centre. One of the largest of the Athenian theatres was built on a slope of the Acropolis hill and seated 30,000.

The greatest Greek tragedians were Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides. Aeschylus (525-456 B.C.) wrote some 80 tragedies of which only seven have survived. The most interesting of these tragedies is *Prometheus Bound* based on the myth of Prometheus, who taught man to obtain fire and thus sowed the seeds for the development of culture and civilisation. By stealing fire from Olympus, Prometheus incurred the wrath of Zeus, who punished him by having him chained to a rock and subjected to terrible torture. Aeschylus depicts Prometheus as a rebel bravely defying the all-powerful gods.

Sophocles (496-406) lived during Athens' Golden Age. He is reputed to have written no less than 120 tragedies of which again only seven have been preserved for posterity. In Sophocles' tragedies we find the development of one of the most prevalent ideas in classical thought—the idea of fate and revenge. One of the best treatments of this theme is to be found in the tragedy *King Oedipus*, where vengeance, even in the case of an involuntary crime, is presented as inevitable.

The third great tragedian was Euripides (480-406 B.C.) who wrote ninety tragedies, eighteen of which have survived. The most famous of these are *Medea*, *Hippolytus*, *The Bacchae* and *Iphigenia in Tauris*.

Euripides' plays were remarkable for their psychological penetration which makes vivid individuals of all his characters. In the works of Euripides the role of the chorus, which had been considerable in the plays of his predecessors, becomes definitely secondary, the main focus being directed on the characters.

A second genre also made its appearance in Greek drama—the comedy which grew up out of the popular farces (or mimes) and the light-hearted or jocular rites connected with the cult of Dionysus.

The leading exponent of this genre was Aristophanes (446-385 B.C.). Eleven of his plays have come down to us, the most famous being *The Wasps*, *The Clouds*, *The Frogs*, *Lysistrata* and *The Knights*. Aristophanes' comedies are of a clearly political

nature. Their author belonged to moderate democrat circles and came down hard on all extreme democratic forms and their champions such as Cleon.

Greek Art and Architecture

Side by side with these great literary achievements we are confronted with further unsurpassed examples of Greek native genius in the realm of architecture and the plastic arts.

There were three main orders of Greek architecture distinguished by the different types of columns or pillars—

Doric, Ionian and Corinthian. The two main schools of Greek sculpture were the Athenian, the most famous representative of which was Phidias, and the Peloponnesian, whose greatest exponent was Polyclitus. Greek sculptors evolved what we term the canon—i.e., normal proportions for the human figure.

The brilliant achievements of Greek sculpture and architecture are well illustrated by the monuments of the age of Pericles in Athens. During this period talented artists flocked to Athens from all over the Greek world. Among them were the great sculptor Phidias, the leading architect of the times Ictinus and the leading painters Polygnotus and Parrasius. The most important works of art with which Athens was embellished at that time were statues of the gods and public buildings distinguished by their superb grace and form. Among the buildings of particular note erected in Athens were the Parthenon and the Propylaea on the Acropolis and the Odeon in the lower town.



Doryphoros (spear carrier). Bronze by Polyclitus. Second half of the fifth century B.C.



The temple of Poseidon at Paestum (Italy). Fifth century B.C.

The Parthenon, a temple dedicated to Athena, traditionally called the House of the Maiden by the Athenian populace, was a magnificent building of white marble, designed by the outstanding architects Ictinus and Callicrates, decorated inside and out with remarkable sculptures. Inside the temple there stood an enormous statue of the Goddess Athena fashioned in ivory and gold, complete with a golden helmet and spear, the work of Phidias.

Another magnificent work of Phidias was the colossal bronze statue of Athena Promachos, or Athena the Warlike, formed from the spoils taken at Marathon. The statue stood at the highest point on the Acropolis so that the golden spear shining in the sunlight could be seen at a great distance and served ships as a beacon.

Another of Phidias' masterpieces was the colossal statue of Zeus in the temple of Zeus in Olympia.

The Propylaea was the monumental gateway to the Acropolis. It consisted of a covered marble colonnade with four side entrances and four marble halls on each side of the main gateway, one of which was decorated with the works of famous painters,

chief among whom was Polygnotus. A wide marble staircase led up to the Propylaea.

The third enormous building erected during the time of Pericles was the Odeon, a theatre designed for musical and poetic contests. Unlike the other theatres, the Odeon was covered in for the sake of better acoustics. It was built in imitation of Xerxes' tent which had been captured from the Persians. The sloping roof of the Odeon was supported on beams fashioned, so legend had it, from the masts of Persian ships. Thus the Odeon served as a monument to the liberation of Greece from the Persian invasion.

The achievements of the ancient Greeks in the spheres of philosophy, literature and art constitute an imperishable part of mankind's cultural heritage.

Chapter Six

THE RISE OF MACEDONIA AND THE EMPIRE OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT

Macedonia in the Mid-Fourth Century B.C.

In the middle of the fourth century B.C. a new Balkan state started to rise to prominence. This was Macedonia, destined to become a powerful rival of Persia in the struggle for hegemony over Greece and the Middle East.

In its economic and political structure Macedonia differed sharply from the other Greek states. It had no outlet to the sea and for a long time was unable to engage in overseas trade or colonisation. As a result of this Macedonia was a good deal less advanced than the other parts of Greece: it was an agrarian country and the vast majority of its people were peasants.

After the Peloponnesian War, Macedonia began to rapidly absorb Greek civilisation. Yet it was not so much industrial techniques, trade and culture that Macedonia assimilated from the Greeks as military skills. Philip II (359-336 B.C.) was responsible for the creation of a mighty army and the introduction of the famous "Macedonian phalanx". Heavy infantry (hoplites) was deployed in rows 16-20 deep and the warriors were armed with lances (up to 15 feet long), the back rows resting their lances on the shoulders of those in front of them. This compact mass of heavy infantry protected with enormous shields made a formidable force.

The pride of the Macedonian army was the heavy cavalry consisting of the Macedonian nobility (hetaeras or companions of the emperor). Another important feature of the Macedonian army was its various siege equipment.

In the mid-fourth century Macedonia had come to constitute a major power in the northern Balkans thanks to its armed forces. Part of Epirus and Thrace were conquered and from that time on Macedonia was to play a decisive role in the affairs of the Greek states.

Macedonia and Greece

The original excuse for Philip's interference in Greek affairs was the war which broke out in 355 between Thebes and the small state of Phocis into which Athens was also drawn.

Philip II routed the Phocians and became master of the whole of northern Greece. He succeeded in conquering Thessaly, most of the Chalcidice peninsula and the littoral of Thrace almost as far as the Bosphorus. Macedonia was thus able to become a maritime power and could control the main waterways from Greece into the Black Sea.

The only Greek state which was still able to put up a certain measure of resistance to Philip of Macedonia was Athens. However, within Athens itself there were two rival factions. The supporters of the pro-Macedonian faction held the view that an alliance with Philip was the only way to put an end to the constant internal strife and feuds; under Philip the Greeks might unite and start a "holy war" against Persia, which apart from revenge for "defamation of the shrines" promised rich booty. The anti-Macedonian faction was led by the celebrated orator Demosthenes. He pointed out that an alliance with Philip would mean loss of freedom, independence and democracy. Demosthenes was able to rally together a strong anti-Macedonian coalition, in which Athens was joined by Thebes, Corinth and some other states.

In August 338 the issue was settled at the battle of Chaeronea in Boeotia. The Macedonian phalanx proved its worth and the Greeks were routed. The left flank of the Macedonian army was commanded by Philip's son Alexander, who was just 18. After the victory, Philip convened a pan-Hellenic congress in Corinth, at which important decisions were taken. An alliance of all Greek states was formed and internecine wars were forbidden. The federation of Greek states concluded a permanent defensive and aggressive alliance with the Macedonian king and it was decided to go to war with Persia.

Philip II started to make careful preparations for this new war. In 336 his advance guard crossed the Hellespont and set foot on the territory of Asia Minor. The war with Persia had begun. But at this juncture Philip was assassinated.

Alexander's Eastern Campaign

Alexander of Macedon was 20 when he came to the throne. However, it would be wrong to infer that he was not equipped to carry out the important role which awaited him. From an early age he had always accompanied his father into battle and was

already an accomplished military commander. He had also received a fine education from his mentor and teacher Aristotle. Alexander was very fond of literature and was well-versed in the *Iliad*, Achilles being his favourite hero.

When he came to the throne after the mysterious and unexpected murder of his father, Alexander found himself in a difficult position. As soon as the news of Philip's death reached the Greek cities unrest broke out. The anti-Macedonian faction in Athens—Demosthenes was still alive—raised its voice again, while in Thebes revolt broke out. However, the young emperor by means of extremely thorough, and sometimes cruel measures (such as the destruction of Thebes and the sale of its people into slavery) succeeded in putting an end to all resistance to Macedonian rule.

In 334 Alexander launched his famous Eastern Campaign. His army was not particularly large: it consisted of about 30,000 foot soldiers, 5,000 cavalry and a fleet of 150-160 warships. Alexander's army crossed the Hellespont and then advanced through Asia Minor. The first battle with the Persians took place on the shores of the river Granicus. Although Alexander was obliged to force a crossing under Persian fire he nevertheless succeeded in defeating the enemy, thus opening the way into Asia. He then marched south along the coast freeing the Greek cities from Persian domination as he went.

In the year 333 B.C. near the town of Issus (in the south-eastern part of Asia Minor) Alexander had to face the main forces of the Persian King Darius III. The Persian troops outnumbered Alexander's army and he resorted to a bold manoeuvre. He led his left flank of light infantry and cavalry a long way forward, skirting Darius' army and attacking it from the rear. In this way he succeeded in surrounding and routing the Persians and Darius was obliged to flee to avoid capture.

Alexander then set off for the Phoenician coast, and after taking Tyre made his way to Egypt. Here he declared himself liberator of the Egyptians from the Persians and the priests proclaimed him to be the son of the God Amon and the heir of the Pharaohs.

In 331 Alexander set off once again deep into Asia, and fought his last great battle against Darius at Gaugamela (not far from Nineveh). Once again the Persians were defeated and Darius forced to flee. In pursuit of Darius Alexander's army marched deep into Persia and captured its three capitals on the way, Babylon, Susa and Persepolis. In these towns Alexander was able to lay his hands on fabulous treasures. In Babylon he solemnly proclaimed himself King of Persia. In pursuit of Darius and later his satraps Alexander crossed the river Oxus (Amu-Darya)



Alexander the Great. The work of Lysippus. Second half of the fourth century B.C.

and set foot on the territory of present-day Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Here he spent approximately two years (till 327) and then enticed by tales of India's fabulous wealth he invaded northern India. Here he defeated the troops of the Indian King Porus in a battle in which, incidentally, both Greeks and Macedonians were to come across war elephants for the first time.

Alexander's army advanced as far as a left tributary of the river Indus, when events took a most unexpected turn. His troops who had hitherto shown no sign of insubordination, stubbornly refused to go any further. After two days' deliberation Alexander was obliged to concede and give the order to return homewards. The return march lasted for a further two years. Part of the troops went by sea and the others by land along the shores of the Persian Gulf, both parts of the army joining forces in Babylon in 324.

So ended Alexander's great Eastern Campaign which lasted for ten years. It enabled him to set up an enormous empire stretching from the Adriatic Sea in the west to India in the east, from the foothills of the Caucasus in the north to the central reaches of the Nile in the south. However, Alexander was not destined to enjoy his unprecedented power for long: the year after his return in 323 B.C. at the age of 32 he met his death and immediately afterwards his enormous empire started to disintegrate.

The Significance of Alexander's Conquests. The Hellenistic Age

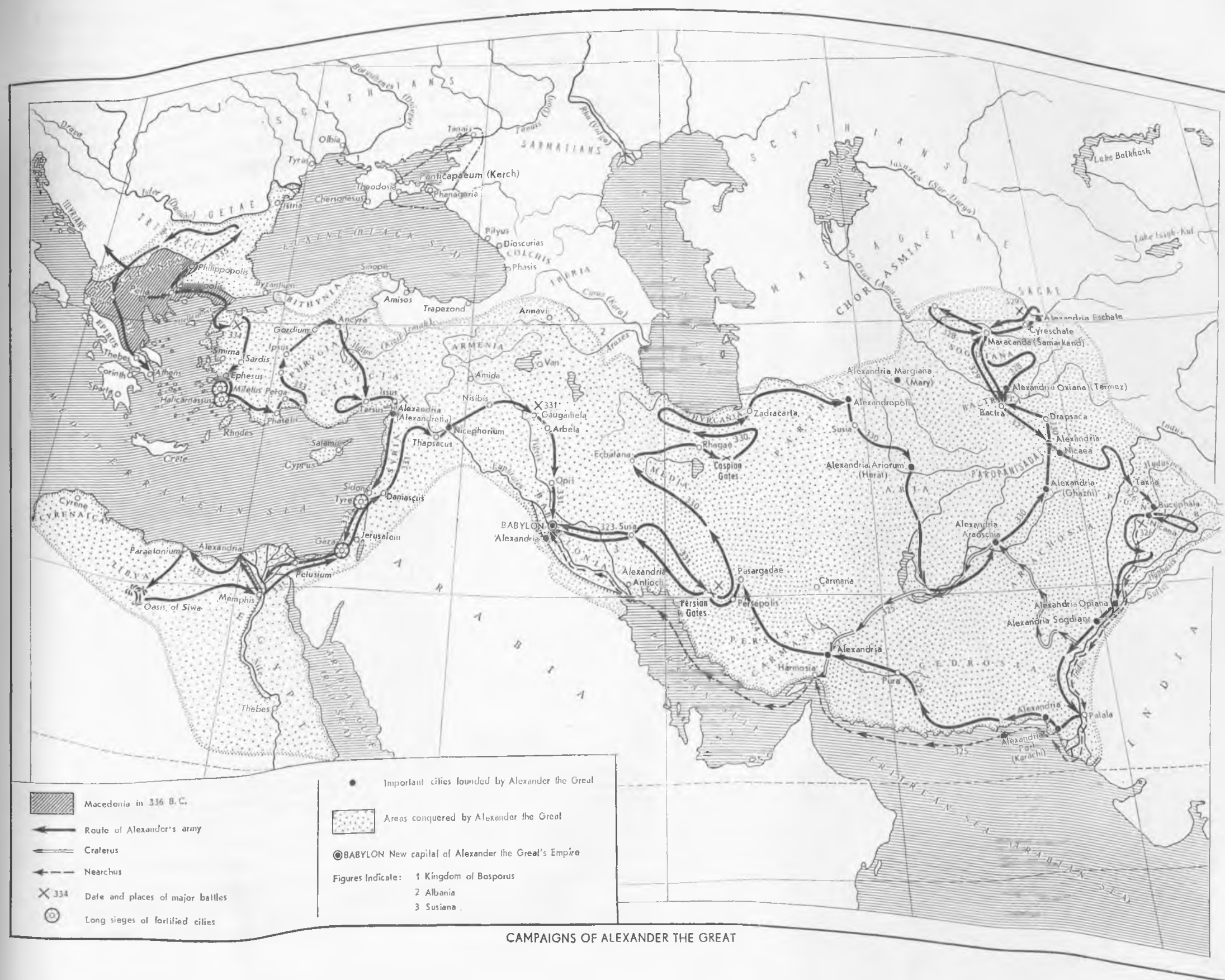
The reasons behind Alexander the Great's victory over the Persian army are perfectly clear and logical. The well-organised Greco-Macedonian army led by a military genius had little dif-

et foot on the territory
 present-day Uzbekistan
 Tajikistan. Here he spent
 ximately two years (till
 and then enticed by tales
 ndia's fabulous wealth
 invaded northern India.
 he defeated the troops
 e Indian King Porus in
 le in which, incidentally,
 Greeks and Macedonians
 to come across war
 ants for the first time.
 exander's army advanced
 r as a left tributary of
 iver Indus, when events
 a most unexpected turn.
 roops who had hitherto
 n no sign of insubordi-
 a, stubbornly refused to
 ny further. After two
 deliberation Alexander
 obliged to concede and
 the order to return home-
 s. The return march
 d for a further two years.
 of the troops went by
 and the others by land
 g the shores of the Per-
 Gulf, both parts of the
 y joining forces in Babylon
 4.

Campaign which lasted
 enormous empire stretch-
 o India in the east, from
 n to the central reaches of
 nder was not destined to
 g: the year after his re-
 his death and immediate-
 ed to disintegrate.

ests. The Hellenistic Age

Great's victory over the
 logical. The well-organised
 ary genius had little dif-



difficulty in overcoming enemy forces made up of a wide assortment of tribes and peoples, including mercenaries. Indeed the enormous Persian Empire was far from firmly welded together: it was a perfect example of the proverbial clay-legged colossus.

Alexander subdued the Persian Empire by force of arms, but the task of consolidating it as a united centralised state proved beyond his power. There was no inner unity of an economic or political kind between the various states and regions incorporated in the Persian Empire. Thus, the empire of Alexander the



The Beacon at Pharos. A reconstruction by A. Tirsh

Great soon fell apart as a result of the strife between his successors. The main states which were then to embark on an independent existence were Egypt, where the Ptolemaic dynasty established itself, the Syrian Kingdom (embracing Syria, Palestine, Babylon and the whole of the Persian Empire as far as the river Indus), where the Seleucid dynasty asserted itself, and finally Macedonia, which retained its hegemony over Greece and the coast of Asia Minor, which fell to Antigonos Gonatas and his successors. The founders of all these dynasties, Ptolemy, Seleucus and Antigonos Gonatas were Alexander's military commanders and successors.

It would be wrong to assume that because Alexander's empire proved short-lived, his Eastern Campaign did not have far-reaching historical consequences. The opposite is true: the period from the death of Alexander till the Roman conquest of Greece and the Middle East is commonly known as the Hellenistic age. We use the word Hellenism in speaking of the establishment of Greek domination over the Middle East and the reciprocal influences of the Greek and Eastern civilisations in the fields of economy, political organisation and culture.

Hellenism was undoubtedly a progressive factor. The Hellenistic age saw a rapid growth of towns, which became centres of trade and advanced industry. The Middle East set up closer economic and cultural ties with the western Mediterranean and the Far East (by way of India). The reciprocal influence between the two cultures proved particularly fruitful. In a number of Hellenistic states intellectual and cultural activity flourished. Important scientific and artistic centres, such as Antioch, the capital of the Seleucid Kingdom, and Alexandria, the capital of Ptolemaic Egypt, grew up. In Alexandria a remarkable scientific foundation was established which was to bring the town universal fame. It was known as the Museum (temple dedicated to the Muses) and consisted of a large library, a vast collection of rare objects and works of art, and was used as a meeting place for scholars, where learned gatherings and debates took place. The Hellenistic period gave the world a number of outstanding mathematicians, astronomers, geographers such as Euclid, Eratosthenes, Archimedes, Hipparchus and Hero. During this period the Greek language became the *lingua franca* of the whole of the eastern shores of the Mediterranean and this factor also served to promote the cultural unity of the Hellenistic countries.

All these achievements of the Hellenistic states in the economic and the cultural spheres prepared the way for the unification of all the Mediterranean states. This was soon to be achieved by Rome, whose empire was eventually to include all the civilised countries of the Mediterranean basin.

Chapter Seven

THE ROMAN REPUBLIC

THE EARLY PERIOD

The cradle of the Roman state was the Apennine peninsula in the central Mediterranean, which together with the nearby island of Sicily forms as it were a natural bridge between Europe and Africa. The coast of the Apennine peninsula is less indented than that of the Balkan peninsula and has less sheltered bays and gulfs. The islands off the shores of Italy are less numerous and varied than those in the Aegean.

Although the Apennine peninsula is a mountainous country like Greece, there is only a single mountain range down the centre, which is bordered on either side by broad valleys suitable both for arable and livestock farming. The soil in Italy is much better suited to farming than that of Greece and in ancient times Italy was always regarded as a typical agrarian country. Her main natural resources were timber and metals (particularly copper and tin).

In ancient times the Apennine peninsula was inhabited by a great variety of peoples. Here we shall refer only to the main groups of tribes. In the north lived various Celtic (or Gallic) tribes. Somewhat further south came the Etruscans, a people who played an important role in early Italian history. The centre of the peninsula was peopled by numerous Italic tribes, including the Latins in whose territory the city of Rome was situated. Finally, in the south the Greek elements predominated and there were a large number of Greek colonies—many of them rich, flourishing cities—so that the name “Magna Graecia” (Greater Greece) was applied to southern Italy and the island of Sicily.

The Etruscan Riddle

The most mysterious of these peoples and tribes inhabiting Italy were the Etruscans. Their origin remains an unsolved riddle to this day. At one time the Etruscans had been a powerful people

and had extended their hegemony to almost the whole of the peninsula (seventh-sixth centuries B.C.). Ruins of large Etruscan cities, fortress walls, noblemen's houses and rich tombs can still be seen today.

Archaeological finds suggest that the Etruscans were a predominantly agricultural people. Etruscan craftsmen were also famous for their metalwork, mirrors and vases, golden and ivory ornaments. They carried on brisk sea trade with the Greeks, the Egyptians and other peoples. In those days maritime trade went hand in hand with piracy and the Etruscan pirates were feared throughout the Mediterranean.

The Etruscans of the fourth century B.C. were a slave-holding people with a king and nobility, and a large population of slaves and vassal peasants. At the height of Etruscan power an alliance was concluded between twelve of their cities.

Rome had already been founded but was under Etruscan domination. In the seventh and sixth centuries B.C. a dynasty of Etruscan kings ruled Rome, and the city's population included many Etruscan craftsmen; Etruscan customs and rites held sway in Roman social and home life for many years afterwards.

However, Etruscan power soon began to wane. At the end of the sixth century B.C. internecine war between the Etruscan cities flared up and the Etruscans also suffered a number of serious setbacks in conflicts with the Greeks in southern Italy. The final blow was dealt to the Etruscan kingdom by a successful uprising of the Italic tribes led by Rome.



An epitaph from Vetulonia with an Etruscan inscription. Seventh century B.C.

Apart from utensils and works of art archaeological excavations have brought to light a large number of Etruscan inscriptions (about nine thousand in all). However, so far attempts to decipher them have met with very limited success and thus the language of the Etruscans, the problem of their origin and many details of their fascinating history still await clarification.

The Founding of Rome

How and when was Rome founded, the city referred to as "eternal" even by the ancients, and whose lot it was to play such an illustrious role? No satisfactory answer can be given to this question, and we are obliged to fall back on the famous legend of the ancients. This tells how one of the kings of the town of Alba Longa was ousted from the throne by his brother, his daughter, Rhea Silvia, being made a vestal virgin and thus obliged to take a vow of celibacy. Nevertheless, Rhea Silvia shortly gave birth to twin boys, and the wrathful king commanded that they be drowned. A slave carried them to the river in a basket and set it on the water. However, they did not drown but were cast ashore under a fig tree where a wolf found them and suckled them. The children were then taken in by a shepherd, who reared them and named them Romulus and Remus.

When the twins grew up the secret of their birth soon spread abroad. In Alba Longa they overthrew the usurper, put their grandfather back on the throne, and asked his permission to found a new city. At the time of founding this city the two brothers had a bitter quarrel and Romulus slew Remus. This was the legend of the founding of Rome, the city named after Romulus, and of which he became the first king. According to ancient Roman historians the city was founded on April 21, 753 B.C. However, this date cannot be vouched for and should only be regarded as a rough guide.

The Kingdom of Rome

The early period of Roman history is often referred to as the time of the kings since according to Roman tradition the city was then a monarchy. There were six kings after Romulus, the last three descendants of the Etruscan tribe of Tarquins. During their reign Rome became a sizable city and succeeded in conquering the whole of Latium.

The last but one king of Rome, Servius Tullius, went down in history as the introducer of a famous social reform, according to

which the whole of the Roman population and territory was divided up into four districts or tribes. The population was also divided into five classes, according to property and income. The poorest citizens were outside these categories altogether and were known as *proletarii*.

Military conscription and the political rights enjoyed by these classes varied considerably. Since every citizen was obliged to obtain weapons at his own expense, it was naturally only members of the highest class who were able to equip themselves with a complete set of heavy armour (sword, shield, spear, and suit of armour) and keep a horse. This class provided the majority of the *centurias* for the national levy, and also enjoyed all the political privileges. At the Popular Assembly the people were represented by the *centurias* and each *centuria* had one vote. Since the majority of the *centurias* were provided by the highest social class, this class could always rely on a majority of votes in the assembly.

At the end of the sixth century B.C. the political pattern of life in Rome changed. The last king known as Tarquin the Proud, because of his arrogance and tyrannical inclinations, was banished and the monarchy was abolished. This event is assumed to have coincided with the victorious uprising against Etruscan rule. A republic, destined to have a long history, was established in Rome.

THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE REPUBLIC

The Social and Political Structure of the Roman Republic

During the rule of the Roman kings and the early history of the Republic relics of the clan system were still fairly strong. Political power was in the hands of representatives of the hereditary aristocracy known as patricians. As a rule, the best lands belonged to them, which meant that the patricians were not only of noble blood but also the richest citizens. The mass of the people were known as plebeians—these included the middle and poorer peasants and also the artisans or traders living in the city. The number of the plebeians was constantly growing and as a group they became less and less homogeneous. The bulk of the plebeians were impoverished, frequently falling into debt slavery, while a certain section was to grow rich through trading or usury. The rich plebeians soon began to seek political rights and privileges like those of the patricians. As for the slaves, at this early period of Roman history there were comparatively few of them and slavery was of a patriarchal variety.

The state structure of the Roman Republic was arranged on the following lines: the highest office was that of consul—of which there were two, elected annually; they were in command of the levy, and it was they who convened the Senate and the assemblies of the people (*comitia*). The Senate was the main state organ of the Roman Republic; it consisted of 300 members and included former consuls and other high-ranking officials. It should be pointed out that the post of consul and hence that of senator as well was only open to members of the patrician class. The Senate decided questions of internal and foreign policy and controlled the budget and the state property. The assemblies of the people were: the popular or centuriate assembly, where almost all state officials were elected and where representatives of the patrician class had a permanent majority in Rome, and the plebeian tribal assembly, to which legislative functions were transferred quite early on.

Although in the Roman Republic, just as in Athens, there existed a popular assembly and elections for state offices (state officials in Rome were never paid for their work), the great weight the Senate carried in state affairs gave the Roman Republic a markedly aristocratic character.

The Struggle Between the Patricians and the Plebeians

The internal history of Rome from the fifth to the third century B.C. was marked by the struggle between the patricians and the plebeians, a struggle for land and political rights. The plebeian masses campaigned for more land, while political equality was the goal of the richer upper stratum.

One of the earliest and most dramatic episodes in this struggle was the so-called Plebeian Secession, when in full armour they all left Rome and set up their camp on the "Holy Mountain" (Mons Sacer—494 B.C.). The departure of the plebeians drastically weakened Rome's military strength and the patricians were obliged to make various concessions. An important new post was created—that of people's tribune, whose role was to champion the interests and rights of the plebeians. These tribunes were elected (at first there were two, then five and later as many as ten) by the plebeian tribal assembly, and were entitled to protest against the orders of all other officials (the right of veto).

In the course of this struggle the plebeians gradually forced the patricians to make new concessions. The so-called laws of the Twelve Tables were decreed (451-450) and the courts which were inevitably in the hands of the patricians were made subject to

these laws. Somewhat later (445 B.C.) marriages between patricians and plebeians were made legal. In the year 367 B.C., plebeians were declared eligible for the post of consul (the laws of Licinius and Sextius) and subsequently for all other high posts in the republic. All this amounted to a virtual levelling out of the rights of the patricians and the richer plebeians and a merging of the two groups. A new patrician-plebeian aristocracy grew up in Rome which came to be known as the nobility. The nobility soon assumed all political power and the Senate became its obedient tool. The vast mass of the poorer plebeians meanwhile had gained nothing and had merely become further impoverished in the course of all this strife.

Rome Conquers Italy, Fifth-Third Centuries B.C.

During these three centuries Rome was almost continually at war. Roman foreign policy inspired by the Senate was extremely aggressive.

During the fifth century, Rome fought against nearby cities and neighbouring tribes, such as the Volsci and the Aequi. Victories in these campaigns gave the Romans complete sway over the right bank of the lower reaches of the Tiber. These were the Romans' first military successes. The fourth century however was to present a very different picture. In 390, the Gauls (as the Romans called the Celts) marched on Rome by way of northern Italy. The Roman troops suffered a crushing defeat in a battle on the river Allia and the Gauls were able to take Rome without difficulty—except for the Capitol Hill which was defended by crack Roman troops. On one occasion they made an attempt to seize the Capitol by night but the sacred geese kept in the temple of Juno raised the alarm and the defenders succeeded in beating off the attack. Hence the famous expression "The geese saved Rome".

In the second half of the fourth century, the Romans waged a grim battle to gain control of central Italy. They were obliged to fight against their former allies, the Latins, and wage three wars against the large Italic tribe of the Samnites. During the so-called Third Samnite War the Romans were opposed not only by the Samnites but the Etruscans as well. The war against the coalition of Italic tribes was waged with fluctuating success, but in the end the Romans emerged victorious and subjugated central Italy.

In the third century B.C. the last stage of the battle for Italy began. Now it was the turn of the cities of Magna Graecia. Some of them joined an alliance with Rome and recognised its leadership, but one of the major southern cities, Tarentum, decided to

resist Roman aggression. The people of Tarentum turned for help to Pyrrhus, King of Epirus in north-west Greece. He was a distant descendant of Alexander the Great, who dreamt of winning the same glory, and he willingly set off to conquer Italy.

Pyrrhus and his troops landed in Italy in the year 280 B.C. In the first battle against the Romans he gained a resounding victory. Pyrrhus then marched north and soon afterwards confronted the Romans a second time at Ausculum where he gained a second victory. However, this battle had been such a fierce one and Pyrrhus' losses so great that he is reputed to have exclaimed: "But if we gain another such victory we are finished!" (Hence the expression "Pyrrhic victory".) After this battle Pyrrhus left with his troops for Sicily, where he spent some time but failed to conquer the island. Later he returned to Italy and in the year 275 B.C. he fought his last battle against the Romans in Beneventum which ended in a rout. Thus Pyrrhus was forced to leave Italy. Two years later Tarentum surrendered to the Romans, who gradually succeeded in gaining control of the other towns of southern Italy. As a result of the wars which the Romans waged throughout the fifth, fourth and third centuries they subjugated the whole of Italy from the southern coast to Cisalpine Gaul. Rome thus succeeded in becoming one of the major Mediterranean powers. Roman aspirations were now directed beyond the borders of the Apennine peninsula and Rome's struggle for control of the whole of the Mediterranean basin had begun.

ROME'S STRUGGLE FOR DOMINATION OF THE MEDITERRANEAN

Rome and Carthage

When the Romans turned their attention further afield, beyond the confines of the Apennine peninsula, their gaze first alighted on Sicily. In the words of one of the ancient historians, this island was a rich and tempting prize near at hand, torn away from Italy as it were.

Yet here the Romans came up against a serious rival in Carthage, another powerful, slave-holding state. The town of Carthage was situated on the north coast of Africa (on the shores of the Gulf of Tunis) and according to legend was founded as far back as the ninth century B.C. It had become an important Mediterranean power long before Rome. The economic power of Carthage was based on her role as a trading centre. Because of her favourable geographical situation Carthage had become the distribution centre for raw materials and finished products through-

out the Mediterranean. In addition it possessed flourishing plantations: the lands around the city belonging to the rich Carthaginians were worked by thousands of slaves. At that time the Carthaginians were also famed for their rational agricultural methods.

The growth of trade and the increasing importance of agriculture had led to political power in Carthage being in the hands of the landowners and merchants. The Carthaginian state structure was that of a republic, but since there were very few free peasants on the land this meant that the democratic aspects in the Carthaginian constitution were deprived of any firm base. The Popular Assembly played a minor role. Executive power was held by two suffetes whose functions resembled those of the Roman consuls and who were in command of the army and the fleet. There was also a Council of 300 similar to the Roman Senate; from among its members a Council of 30 was elected which carried out all the interim work between meetings of the Council of 300. The Carthaginians had a strong army and navy. The weakness of their army lay in the fact that it consisted mainly of mercenaries. However, its professional standards were high and its technical equipment advanced (war elephants, siege weapons, etc.).

The Carthaginians were active colonisers. They founded subject colonies on the north coast of Africa, in southern Spain and on the Balearic islands. Carthaginians had also settled in Corsica and Sardinia and at the time of their first confrontation with Rome they controlled almost the whole of Sicily with the exception of Syracuse and Messana. It was their attempt to subjugate the latter city that led to the conflict with Rome.

The First and Second Punic Wars

The First Punic War (the Romans referred to the Carthaginians as the Punic people) lasted for twenty-three years (264-241 B.C.). The first engagements took place in Sicily where the Romans scored a number of successes. However these successes were never decisive since the Romans had no fleet and were thus unable to contest Carthaginian sea-power. Only after the Romans had built a fleet and won their first sea victory were they able to transfer the theatre of operations to African territory. However, this first African expedition was badly prepared and ended in complete failure.

The war dragged on with hostilities once more centred on Sicily. Both armies were obliged to fight all-out in this evenly matched conflict which came to an end only after the decisive sea battle of the Aegadian isles to the west of Sicily (241 B.C.) when the

Carthaginian fleet was defeated once and for all. After this the Carthaginians had no choice but to conclude a peace treaty seceding Sicily to Rome and pay large tribute.

Some time afterwards the Romans committed an act of unprovoked aggression by seizing Corsica and Sardinia. Yet the Carthaginians were obliged to resign themselves to this as well since a revolt of the mercenaries broke out nearer home, which constituted a particularly dangerous threat when the people of Libya joined forces with the insurgents.

This revolt was put down by the Carthaginian General Hamilcar Barca who had risen to prominence in the First Punic War. After quelling the revolt he gained considerable authority in Carthage and was acknowledged as chief among the military leaders who dreamt of a new war of revenge against Rome. In order to prepare better for a new confrontation, Hamilcar set off with the Carthaginian army to Spain which he hoped to conquer and thus create a bridgehead for the imminent war with the Romans.

During the fighting in Spain Hamilcar died. The command of the Carthaginian troops was first taken over by his son-in-law and then by his young son Hannibal. According to legend, when Hamilcar set off to conquer Spain, Hannibal who was then aged eleven asked his father to take him with him. Hamilcar agreed, but on condition that Hannibal take a vow of eternal enmity towards Rome. Hannibal took this vow and remained true to it all his life.

When Hannibal took over the command of the army the question of war with Rome had for all practical purposes already been decided. The Second Punic War began in 218 B.C. and lasted for a whole seventeen years. Hannibal devised a bold plan for war against Rome on Italian soil. In order to carry out this plan he had to undertake the extremely difficult task of crossing the Alps. In his battles against the Romans Hannibal displayed remarkable military genius, and inflicted a series of crushing defeats on the Roman army, the most famous of which was at the Battle of Cannae (216 B.C.) when Hannibal succeeded in surrounding and routing his enemy.

However Hannibal's campaign against Rome proved to be practically a one-man effort against a mighty state. Carthage did not provide its military leader with the necessary support. For this reason, although he did not suffer a single defeat, Hannibal eventually found himself cut off and isolated in southern Italy. The cities which had come over onto his side were gradually won back by the Romans and the young Roman commander Publius Cornelius Scipio scored a number of victories against the Carthaginians in Spain. After ridding Spain of Carthaginian troops,

Scipio proposed a campaign in Africa. He organised an expeditionary force and landed not far from Carthage, upon which the Carthaginian government hastened to summon Hannibal back from Italy. In the year 202 B.C. the decisive battle of the war was fought at Zama, where Hannibal was to suffer his first and last defeat. On this occasion the conditions for peace put forward by the Romans were still more demanding than before: Carthage lost her colonies, handed over her fleet and all her elephants to the Romans and finally paid out tremendous tribute. These conditions undermined the military and political might of Carthage once and for all, so that the outcome of the Second Punic War left Rome the strongest power in the Mediterranean.

The Subjugation of the Balkan Peninsula. The Third Punic War

However, Rome was destined to be confronted by Carthage yet a third time, a mere fifty years after the end of the Second Punic War.

During the intervening half-century, the Romans tenaciously pursued their territorial aspirations in the eastern Mediterranean. They waged three wars against the most dangerous of their eastern rivals—Hellenistic Macedonia. After the Second Macedonian War, the Romans arrogantly declared themselves liberators of Greece and in the year 196 the Roman commander Flaminius proclaimed it independent. In practical terms Greece had merely exchanged one ruler for another.

After the Second Macedonian War hostilities broke out with the Syrian King Antiochus, who tried to form an anti-Roman coalition in the East. This was followed by yet another Macedonian War when the Macedonian King Perseus made a final attempt to set up a coalition against Rome. He was defeated and soon afterwards Macedonia became a province of Rome. When a liberation movement made its appearance in Greece the Romans brutally suppressed it, and in order to intimidate the Greeks still further destroyed Corinth (146 B.C.), one of the oldest and most illustrious cities of Greece.

In the year 149, the Third Punic War broke out. Since the last war Carthage, owing to her extremely favourable geographical situation, had been able to re-establish her economic position. Once again the city had become a major centre for Mediterranean trade. The Romans found this state of affairs intolerable. After accusing the Carthaginians of violating one of the points in the peace treaty of 201 B.C., they again declared war on their old rival, in the year 149. The siege of Carthage lasted for about

three years. It was finally taken by storm in a manoeuvre directed by Scipio's adopted grandson, Scipio Aemilianus. On instructions from Rome the city was totally destroyed: it was set fire to and burned for sixteen days. Then all the land where ruins were still smouldering was ploughed over and an eternal curse was laid on it (146).

The Results of the Wars. The Roman Economy. A Slave-holding Society

The predatory wars which Rome waged in the Mediterranean basin for over a century transformed a small and insignificant city-state into a world power. This was inevitably reflected in the structure of Roman society, and led above all to important economic changes.

The Roman conquests assured the city of an uninterrupted flow of money and valuables. After the First Punic War the Roman treasury received 3,200 talents. The indemnity acquired after the Second Punic War totalled ten thousand talents and a tribute of 15,000 was demanded from Antiochus. Tremendous booty was brought back by victorious Roman commanders. In the course of Aemilius Paulus' triumphal entry into the city after his victory over the Macedonian King Perseus a procession of soldiers carrying and drawing on chariots captured works of art, valuable weapons, and enormous jars filled with gold and silver coins, took three days to march into Rome. After the victory over Antiochus the Romans brought home booty in the form of 1,280 elephant's tusks, 234 gold garlands, 187 thousand pounds of silver, 224 thousand Greek silver coins, 140 thousand golden Macedonian coins and a large amount of gold and silver jewelry. Right up until the second century there was a shortage of silver coins in Rome but after these conquests, in particular after the capture of the Spanish silver mines the Roman state had ample silver at its disposal for its coinage.

All this led to rapid expansion of Rome's trading and financial dealings. Whole groups of tax-farmers sprang up who took on themselves the farming out of various forms of social services in Italy or the collection of taxes in the Roman provinces. These groups also lent out money for interest.

This growth of trade and revenue was accompanied by a tremendous expansion of the slave population. Although war was not the only source of new slaves, the constant wars had nevertheless brought an enormous number of slaves onto the market. During the First Punic War the capture of Agrigentum alone brought the Romans 25,000 slaves. Several years later after gaining a victory over the Carthaginians the Roman consul Regulus

despatched 20,000 slaves to Rome. After the capture of Tarentum in the year 209, 30,000 of the town's inhabitants were sold into slavery. In 167 B.C. after the rout of the cities of Epirus, 150 thousand souls were sold as slaves. Finally, at the end of the Third Punic War when Carthage was destroyed, all its inhabitants were enslaved. These figures are chosen at random and present by no means the whole picture, but they serve to convey at least some idea of the enormous mass of slaves running into hundreds of thousands which was literally pouring into Rome at that time.

There were slave markets in almost all the major cities of the Roman state, in addition to those in Rome itself. An important centre of the slave trade was the island of Delos, where sometimes as many as 10,000 slaves were sold in a day. Prices varied according to supply. They fell considerably at times of successful military expeditions. The saying "as cheap as a Sardinian" caught on in Rome soon after the conquest of Sardinia.

However, the prices of educated slaves or those possessing special qualifications (for example teachers, actors, cooks and dancers) were always very high and wealthy Roman citizens were prepared to pay sums running into thousands for them.

In Italy itself, which remained an agrarian country, slaves were used mainly for work on the land. The slaves working on the landed estates or *latifundia* and in the landowners' villas lived in particularly grim conditions. The Roman writer and statesman Cato the Elder, in his special work devoted to agriculture proffers detailed advice as to how slaves should be exploited to the owner's greatest advantage. He recommended that they should be made to work on rainy days as well as fine ones and even on religious holidays.

The wars of the third and second centuries B.C., which were mainly fought on Italian soil, undermined the peasant economy. The military expeditions to distant lands overseas, which took the peasants away from their land for months and sometimes years at a stretch also contributed towards its decline. The peasants became impoverished, left the country to come and seek work in the town, while the work of the slaves gradually came to constitute the backbone of Roman agriculture. In addition, the small and middle peasants were unable to compete with the large landed estates, where slave labour was used. Poverty and land hunger facing the peasants soon became one of the most acute problems of the Roman state.

The growth of trade and financial dealings, the expansion of the slave market, the impoverishment of the peasants—all bore witness to the fact that the Roman state had become a state with an advanced slave-holding society, i.e., a society with two main

diametrically opposed classes, those of slaves and slave-holders. This in its turn implied that social contradictions were bound to become more acute and eventually give rise to an intense class struggle.

CRISIS OF THE ROMAN REPUBLIC

Slave Revolts in Sicily

The first striking example of the acute class struggle within the Roman state was the wave of slave revolts in Sicily.

Sicily had become a Roman province governed by a Roman commander. It was an extremely fertile island, where the large landowner magnates had numerous estates worked by thousands of slaves. The uprising started on the estate of a certain Damophilus, one of these magnates who treated his slaves with exceptional cruelty. Damophilus was murdered and his villa was burnt down.

This event served as a signal for a mass revolt. The centre of the revolt was the city of Enna, which the slaves succeeded in capturing under the leadership of a Syrian slave named Eunus. Soon afterwards Agrigentum also fell into their hands. Here the insurgent slaves were led by Cleon, a former Cilician shepherd. The terrified slave-owners counted on differences arising between the two leaders and the two sides taking up arms against each other. However, this did not happen—on the contrary, the two camps joined forces. By this time almost the whole of Sicily was in the hands of the slaves. As the majority of the insurgents were Syrians they proclaimed the foundation of a neo-Syrian kingdom and elected Eunus as king, conferring on him the traditional name for Syrian kings, that of Antiochus.

The Roman troops stationed in Sicily were defeated on several occasions by the insurgent slaves. The Romans were obliged to send a large army, led by a consul. However, the struggle was a long and bitter one; altogether fighting lasted for no less than four years (136-132 B.C.). The revolt was suppressed with extreme cruelty. After an interval of about thirty years (104-99) a new slave revolt broke out in Sicily and again the island was in the hands of the slaves for a considerable time. Once again the Romans only succeeded in suppressing the uprising after sending large forces to the island.

The Revolt of the Gracchi

At the time of the first slave uprising in Sicily a wide democratic movement was also growing up in Rome, which came to be known as the movement of the Gracchi brothers.

Tiberius Gracchus was born into the plebeian section of the nobility, a descendant of the line of Sempronius and related to the Scipios. In the year 133 he was elected tribune and announced his famous plan for a new agrarian law, the essence of which consisted in a proposal to set up a limit for the size of landed estates, which were not to exceed 1,000 jugers (a juger = about 0.62 acre) per family. He also proposed that surplus land should be confiscated or redistributed among the poorest citizens in lots of 30 jugers. A commission of three persons was to be elected and granted an absolutely free hand.

When he put forward these plans Tiberius Gracchus was setting himself two tasks: to reconsolidate the impoverished peasantry and to uphold Roman military power, in as far as the basis of this power was a peasant army. However, his proposals were violently opposed by the majority of the senators, who were all important landowners.

A bitter struggle ensued. One of Tiberius Gracchus' fellow-tribunes, Marcus Octavius, under pressure from the opponents of the agrarian law made use of his tribune's veto. In response to this action Tiberius Gracchus forbade all officers of state to put through any state business before the day when the new law would be put to the vote.

When the day of voting came and the plebeian tribal assembly convened, Tiberius Gracchus put to the assembled the question as to whether a tribune acting against the interests of the people should remain in office. The unanimous answer was negative and Octavius was stripped of his office. After that the new law was passed without any obstruction and Tiberius Gracchus, his brother Gaius and his father-in-law Appius Claudius were elected to form the commission.

In the course of a year the commission carried out its work in extremely difficult conditions. The wave of hatred of the nobility and senators for Tiberius Gracchus grew and when, desirous of carrying out his reform to the end Tiberius again stood for office at the next elections (132 B.C.), a skirmish broke out in the Popular Assembly. Tiberius Gracchus and about 300 of his supporters were killed and their bodies were thrown into the Tiber.

After Tiberius' murder the opponents of the reform triumphed. However, their rejoicing was short-lived. In the year 123 Tiberius' younger brother Gaius was elected tribune. Gaius who was a figure still more resolute and radical than his brother openly opposed the Senate and in his struggle against it sought support from the poorest sections of the city populace. In their interest he put through the so-called corn law which stipulated that grain from the state granaries should be sold at reduced prices. Also in the interest of this social stratum Gaius Gracchus introduced a

law for the foundation of a number of colonies. This was a most timely measure, since the lands which had been redistributed after the introduction of the agrarian reform had since been disposed of. A number of colonies were set up in southern Italy and plans were made for founding another on the site of ruined Carthage.

As a result of his introduction of all these measures Gaius achieved that which had eluded his brother—he was elected tribune a second time, in 122 B.C. Yet Gaius' political enemies were not standing idle. They made the most of the fact that Gaius was planning to set up a colony in Carthage, on which an eternal curse had been laid. Apart from this, during the second year of his tribuneship Gaius Gracchus proposed that the rights—and hence the privileges as well—of Roman citizens be granted to all the Italic peoples. Gracchus' enemies, the supporters of the Senate, did not find it particularly difficult to convince the Romans that the introduction of such a law would not be in their interests, since apart from other reasons the Italics would then be able to lay just as much claim to all types of military booty as the Romans themselves.

Before the elections for the next year, 121 B.C., almost the whole population of Rome was divided into two hostile camps. Gracchus' supporters seized the Aventine Hill and prepared for a siege. The Senate declared a state of war in the city and sent special troops to storm the Aventine. The resistance of Gracchus' men was soon suppressed. Not wishing to be captured by the enemy alive Gracchus ordered one of his slaves to kill him. The victors avenged themselves most cruelly and slew three thousand of Gracchus' supporters.

The movement led by the Gracchi brothers was suppressed, but its impact was to make itself felt in the subsequent history of Rome. It sowed the seeds for a broad revolutionary movement which started in Rome and then spread over the whole of Italy among the peasantry and the city poor. This movement was a fight for land, political rights and a more democratic state.

Roman Society at the End of the Second and Beginning of the First Century. The Social War

A feature of Roman society at this period was the hostile relations between the various classes and estates. The main hostile camps, as we have seen, were those of the slave-owners and slaves. But apart from these two basic groups, there existed another class best referred to as the class of free producers, which included the middle and poor peasants and a wide assortment of artisans.

The Romans themselves did not divide society up into these classes as such but defined a number of estates which sometimes corresponded almost exactly with the above class divisions. The highest estate in Roman society was that of the nobility or senators, which included the noble and rich families which had always played an important part in state affairs. The main source of these families' wealth was their landed estates. Representatives of this estate often occupied the highest posts and were members of the Senate. The second most important estate was that of the so-called equites. This name did not imply at all that they served in the cavalry: the term was a relic from the past and by this stage of Roman history was applied to rich citizens not of noble descent, traders and money-lenders. Finally, the rest of the population was referred to by the traditional term of plebs. In the country, the plebs meant the peasants and in the towns the artisans, small traders, master craftsmen and shop-keepers. Slaves in the Romans' eyes did not form a separate estate, although in practice they made up a separate, self-contained estate, deprived of any rights.

In the political life of Rome it was the senators who always pursued the most reactionary, anti-democratic course. The bastion of democracy both in town and country were the plebs. The equites occupied a position between the two. They often supported the plebs, especially in the towns, but when they considered that the plebs were taking too revolutionary a stand, then they would go over to the side of the aristocracy. The slaves occupied a position of negligible importance in Roman political life.

After the revolt of the Gracchi, despite the hard measures adopted by the nobility, the democratic forces in Roman society started to take a firmer stand. It proved impossible to altogether halt the movement which had been started by the Gracchi brothers. Moreover, the senators had seriously compromised themselves during the war with the Numidian King Jugurtha. It turned out that this war had been waged inefficiently and without success because Jugurtha had bribed various Roman senators and even generals. The war took a different course only after the command had been entrusted to a military commander who was not of noble descent but extremely talented and a favourite with democratic circles—Gaius Marius. He not only succeeded in subduing Jugurtha, but also in averting a much greater danger threatening Rome from the north—the threat of invasion by the Cimbri and the Teutons (tribes of Gallic and Germanic origin).

Marius introduced extremely important military and political reforms. Since the laws of Servius Tullius had been adopted only members of the five propertied classes had been eligible for military service, while proletarii had been excluded. Marius did

away with these restrictions and this resulted in radical changes in the social structure of the army. While hitherto the main bulk of the army had been made up of more or less prosperous peasants, the role and influence of the poorer social strata now started to make themselves felt much more.

At the end of the second and beginning of the first century B.C. the democratic movement consolidated still further. A number of tribunes, followers of the Gracchi, came to play an important role in Roman politics. For example, in the year 100 Saturninus introduced a law for the distribution of land to Marius' soldiers and a new reduction in the price of bread. Then in 91 B.C. Marcus Livius Drusus put forward a proposal for making the Italics fully-fledged citizens. Yet at this period the forces of reaction, in particular the Senate, were still strong enough to resist such reforms. Drusus was murdered: yet on this occasion his murder served as a signal for a popular uprising throughout Italy.

The civil war which swept over the whole of Italy lasted for two whole years (90-88 B.C.), and never before had Rome found itself in such a dire predicament. Rome's victory on this occasion was only a formal one—only after the Italics had been promised equal rights did they agree to cease hostilities, and this issue after all had been the cause of the war.

This civil war was to play a major role in the subsequent history of Rome. In as far as all the inhabitants of Italy had now become Roman citizens, the city of Rome and its people lost their previous importance and their privileged position. In fact, the outcome of this war represented a victory for Italy as a whole over Rome.

The Struggle Between Marius and Sulla

While the civil war was still going on, new hostilities flared up in the East. Here the Romans found themselves in an extremely dangerous predicament. The Pontic King, Mithridates VI, came forward as the champion of the interests of the peoples of the East.

Mithridates VI was undoubtedly an outstanding figure. Extremely tall and strong, he possessed a wide education including a command of 22 languages. He succeeded in extending the frontiers of his kingdom to include the Kingdom of the Bosphorus, Colchis and Little Armenia. In the year 88 he invaded the Roman possessions in Asia Minor with a large army. The local population welcomed him as a liberator and when Mithridates gave the signal, 30,000 Romans in the cities of Asia Minor were slain in one day. On this mounting tide of success Mithridates then advanced to occupy Greece.

The command of the Roman army sent to meet Mithridates was entrusted to Sulla, who had been elected consul in the year 88. He had gained a reputation as a gifted military commander in the course of the recent civil war. However, Sulla was known to be a supporter of the Senate, and the people of Rome led by the tribune Sulpicius Rufus opposed the choice of Sulla. The Popular Assembly decided to appoint Marius in Sulla's place to lead this campaign.

When Sulla learnt of this decision—at the time he was in the south of Italy with his army—he made a speech to the soldiers. After winning them round to his point of view Sulla marched on Rome with his army. Fighting broke out in the streets of the city: Sulpicius Rufus was killed and Marius fled. Thus for the first time in its long history Rome was captured by rebel Roman soldiers. After this, Sulla set out with his troops for Greece, where he spent almost three years and won a number of victories over Mithridates, which enabled him to drive all enemy forces out of Greece. Sulla did not march as far as Asia Minor, since Mithridates had already sued for peace. Sulla by this time also needed to bring hostilities to an end, since during his absence Marius had seized power in Rome and circumstances demanded his speedy return.

The coup d'état which had taken place in Rome had been led by Cinna and Marius, who had been elected consul for the seventh time. However, soon after entering office Marius died. Nevertheless Sulla was obliged to take Rome by force once again. In the spring of 83 B.C. he landed with his army in the south of Italy and this marked the beginning of the next stage of the Italian civil war. Sulla emerged the victor and after marching on Rome for the second time he succeeded in setting up a dictatorship. In order to mete out punishment to his political opponents he introduced what were known as proscriptions, special lists of persons Sulla chose to outlaw and whom anyone could kill and even receive a reward for doing so. In this way more than 100 senators and 2,500 equites were slain. Sulla introduced a number of anti-democratic laws, which limited the powers of the tribunes, forbade corn doles, etc. However Sulla's reign of terror did not last long and the laws he introduced were soon abolished.

The Spartacus Revolt

The revolt of the slaves led by Spartacus was the most dramatic and large-scale slave uprising in the whole history of the ancient world. It started in the year 73 and lasted until 71 B.C.

The initial conspiracy of approximately 200 slaves took place in

one of the gladiator schools in the town of Capua. The conspiracy was discovered, but a small group of slaves numbering about 80 managed to escape. They set up their camp on Mount Vesuvius and chose Spartacus to lead them. He was a truly gifted leader, a talented organiser and military commander. He came from Thrace and seems to have served in the Roman auxiliary forces before being sold into slavery for desertion.

At first little importance was attached to this conspiracy and the escape of the gladiators. However, Spartacus' forces quickly grew, and the Romans eventually sent out a detachment three thousand strong against him. This detachment gained control of the sole descent from Vesuvius thus cutting off the slave army's communications. However, this gave Spartacus a chance to put his talents as a military commander to the test for the first time. At his command the slaves made ropes out of grape vine tendrils and under cover of night a small group of them made their way to the rear of the enemy camp and succeeded in routing the Roman troops. Soon Spartacus' army numbered several thousand and before long the slaves had overrun almost the whole of southern Italy.

At this stage however a split took place in the insurgent slave army, which can most probably be accounted for by the fact that Spartacus' army included slaves of various nationalities—Thracians, Greeks, Gauls and Germans. Two detachments split away from the main army, and were soon defeated by the Romans. Spartacus meanwhile moved north, and later near the town of Mutina scored a further resounding victory, which marked the high-point of his success. Soon after this his army totalled 120,000 men.

After the battle of Mutina Spartacus turned towards Rome. True panic broke out in the city, such as the Romans had probably not experienced since the time of Hannibal. The Senate accorded emergency powers to an extremely rich slave-owner Marcus Crassus and sent him to lead the legions against Spartacus.

Spartacus however by-passed Rome and marched south. It is most probable that he was planning to set sail for Sicily. However, this proved impossible to organise due to the lack of ships, and the rafts which the slaves built for this purpose were wrecked by a storm. By this time Crassus and his army had succeeded in catching up with the slaves. The decisive battle was to take place in the year 71 in southern Italy. Before the battle began Spartacus' men brought their leader a horse but he drew his sword and killed it, declaring that if he was to be victorious then there would be an abundance of the finest horses at his disposal and if he was to lose then he would not need any horse at all. After a bloody

battle in which losses were high on both sides, the slaves were defeated. Spartacus himself, after putting up a heroic fight was killed on the field.

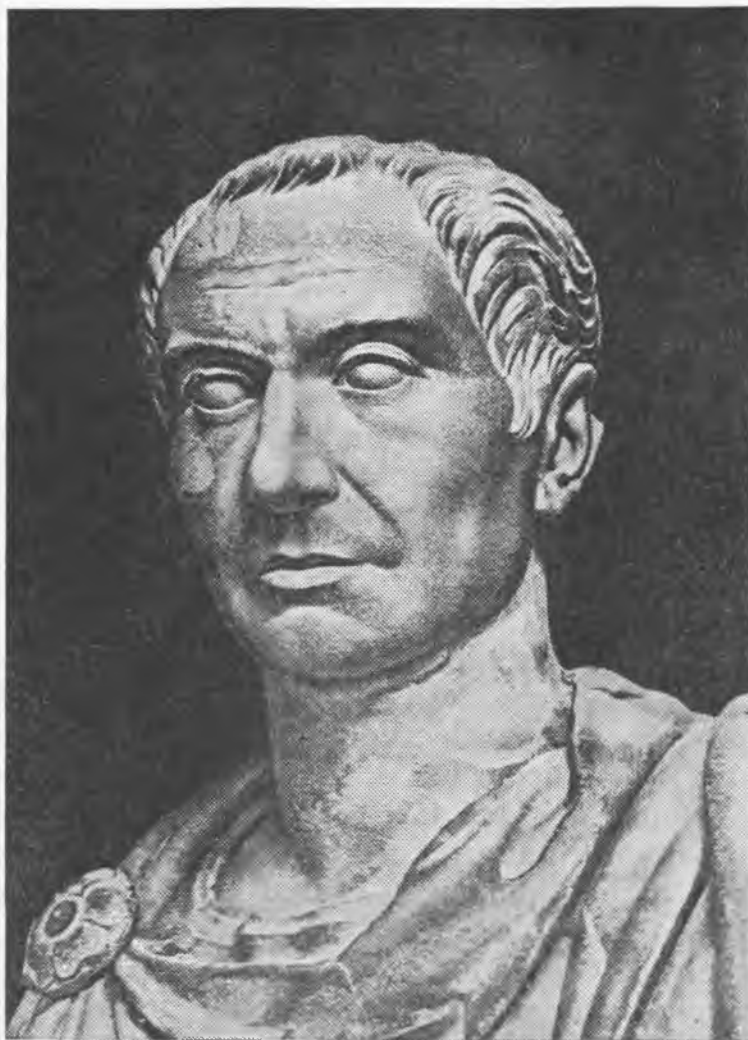
The slave revolt was brutally suppressed. By way of revenge and to rub in their triumph the victors had six thousand slaves crucified along the road leading from Capua, the town where the uprising had started, to Rome. The Spartacus revolt was indicative of just how acute the contradictions between the two main classes of Roman society—the slaves and the slave-owners—had grown.

Pompey's Eastern Campaign

At almost the same time as the outbreak of the Spartacus revolt a new war began against Mithridates (74-64 B.C.). For the first seven years of this war Rome's Eastern army was commanded by the experienced Lucullus. He scored a number of major successes but was unable to crush Mithridates completely. In addition, his extreme severity evoked strong dissatisfaction on the part of the soldiers. This led to the Popular Assembly (against the wishes of the Senate) giving the command of the Eastern army to Pompey.

Gnaeus Pompey had made a name for himself when Sulla was still in power and consolidated his reputation during the civil war. Later he was sent to help Crassus put down the Spartacus revolt. He did not succeed in joining forces with Crassus in time for the main battle but after Spartacus had been slain he encountered and routed a large detachment of the slave army which had escaped and was moving north. In the year 67 he won great popularity as a result of his energetic and successful campaign against the pirates terrorising the whole of the Mediterranean coast. Pompey was to carry out his next task—the defeat of Mithridates—equally successfully. He not only routed the army of the Pontic king but entered Armenia and succeeded in turning it into a vassal kingdom, gave support to the uprising in the Kingdom of the Bosphorus, after which Mithridates committed suicide, and finally conquered Syria and Judaea. In Asia Minor he re-established and refounded a number of Rome's small subject states. As was proclaimed at the time of his triumphal entry into Rome after the campaign, Pompey had defeated 22 kings, conquered 1,538 towns and fortresses and subjugated some 12 million people. Pompey's Eastern Campaign completed the subjugation of the Hellenistic East (with the exception of Egypt) which had begun after the Second Punic War.

At the time when Pompey returned to Rome with his army the Catiline conspiracy was exposed and crushed. Lucius Sergius Ca-



The head of a marble statue of Julius Caesar. First century B.C.

tiline, member of a long line of patricians, led a movement which aimed at carrying out a coup d'état and abolishing debts. This secondary aim of the conspirators attracted both the younger generation of the aristocracy, which was up to its eyes in debt, and the poorer sections of the townspeople.

The famous orator Cicero who had been elected consul in 63 B.C. actively opposed Catiline and his accomplices. First he succeeded in having Catiline banished from Rome and later in having the remaining leaders of the conspiracy who had stayed behind arrested. At a specially convened meeting of the Senate their lot was decided and on that same evening they were all executed. Meanwhile Catiline gathered together a small army in Etruria, against which the Senate sent out troops under consul Antonius. During the grim battle that ensued Catiline and some three thousand of his supporters met death bravely.

The First Triumvirate and the Gallic War

Soon after the Catiline conspiracy had been crushed political power in Rome was seized by three outstanding commanders who formed the First Triumvirate (60 B.C.)—a coalition of three rulers—which was soon to be aptly christened “the three-headed monster”. Its members were Pompey, Crassus and Julius Caesar.

Gaius Julius Caesar (100-44 B.C.) was not yet such a prominent figure as Crassus and Pompey. However, he was a man of tremendous ambition, energy and talent. He soon became the virtual leader of the Triumvirate, particularly after being elected consul in 59 B.C. As consul, Caesar tried to pursue the policies of the democratic tribunes. He introduced an agrarian law which decreed that plots of land should be allotted to Pompey's former soldiers (veterans).

However, Caesar realised that the democratic sections of the population, i.e., the plebs both in the towns and in the country could not provide him with the firm support he required to further his ambitious drive for power. This required devoted and well-armed troops. This led Caesar to go out of his way to gain the governorship of the province of Gaul for five years. Since Gaul still had to be conquered, Caesar was given permission to assemble an army.

The conquest of Gaul took seven years. The first enemy to be encountered by Caesar was the tribe of the Helveti (living on the territory of present-day Switzerland). Then he was faced by the Suebi led by Ariovistus. Finally, after a long fight against the Belgae, Gaul was conquered and declared a Roman province. In honour of these victories the Senate ordained thanksgiving rites lasting for fifteen days.

In the spring of the year 56 in Luca (northern Etruria) a meeting of the triumvirs took place and Caesar's powers in Gaul were extended for a further five years. In 55 B.C. Caesar carried out an expedition to the Rhine to subdue Germanic tribes there and in 54 B.C. he landed in Britain.

However, it soon emerged that Gaul was far from subdued. In the year 54 a wide-scale Gallic uprising broke out. The initiators of this uprising were the Arverni tribes led by Vercingetorix. The Romans were in a very difficult position. Caesar only had 60,000 men against the enemy's 300,000. It was Caesar's skilful manoeuvring, his talent for organisation and military leadership and subtle diplomacy, helped by a feud in the ranks of the insurgent army, which enabled the Romans to emerge victorious from this battle. In the year 51 B.C. the last insurgent strongholds were crushed.

The harvest of the conquest of Gaul was tremendous. Caesar subjugated 300 tribes, took 800 towns by storm and took a million prisoners. He also brought back to Rome tremendous booty: in Rome the price of gold dropped steeply and it was sold by the pound. All these factors helped to increase Caesar's popularity.

The Civil War

By the end of the Gallic War the First Triumvirate had virtually ceased to exist following the defeat and death of Crassus in Parthia. As for Caesar and Pompey, the more successful and popular the former became, the colder and more hostile were the relations between them. After Caesar's term of office in Gaul had come to an end it was required of him that he disband his legions.

However, this Caesar did not do and the Senate then declared him an enemy of the fatherland and instructed Pompey to muster an army in Italy to counter him.

Caesar did not waste time waiting for Pompey. In January of 49 B.C. with one of his legions he crossed the Rubicon which marked the boundary between the territory under Caesar's command and Italy. According to tradition, he crossed the Rubicon with the words "The die is cast", since he realised that his action marked the beginning of a new chapter of civil war.

The towns of northern Italy put up hardly any resistance to Caesar's troops. Pompey, who had not had time to make the necessary preparations for war, took refuge in the Balkans where he was followed by a large number of the senators. Caesar entered Rome without resistance. There was no sense in his remaining there for long though, and so he set off with his troops for Spain, where there were seven legions loyal to Pompey. Having defeated them and thus made sure of his rear, Caesar decided to cross over to the Balkans.

At the outset Caesar's campaign against Pompey was rather unsuccessful. On one occasion Caesar suffered a major defeat, but his opponent did not follow up his victory with sufficient energy, and Caesar was able to retain the bulk of his army. The decisive battle was fought in 48 B.C. near the town of Pharsalus. Pompey's army was defeated and he fled to Egypt where he was treacherously murdered.

Caesar followed Pompey to Egypt. Here he interfered in local affairs of state and intrigues, coming to the aid of Queen Cleopatra against her brother. This led to the outbreak of an uprising in Alexandria which Caesar was hard put to it to suppress. After that Caesar was obliged to move east against Pharnaces, son of

Mithridates. Caesar brought this campaign to a successful conclusion with lightning speed, in a mere five days, and then sent to the Senate his famous message "*Veni, vidi, vici*".

Pompey's main forces were now in Africa and with them was Caesar's inveterate enemy Cato the Younger. In the year 46 B.C. an important battle took place near Thapsus on the eastern coast of the Roman province of Africa, near present-day Tunis. Pompey's army was routed once and for all and Cato committed suicide. Soon afterwards Caesar succeeded in subduing Numidia and in the summer of that same year he returned to Rome where lavish celebrations were held in honour of his victories over Gaul, Egypt, Pontus and Numidia.

However, the struggle against Pompey's supporters was not yet over. Pompey's sons succeeded in renewing the fighting, this time in Spain. In the year 45, at the battle of Munda, Caesar dealt the final blow to his enemies, although only after a long struggle costing many lives. Caesar himself admitted that on this occasion he had fought not for victory but for his very life.

So the civil war was over at last and Caesar was made dictator for life. There seemed now to be no limits to his power. The Popular Assembly obediently carried out his wishes and state offices were allotted in accordance with his recommendations.

Monarchistic leanings in Caesar's behaviour gradually came more and more to the fore. On several occasions his closest followers tried to persuade Caesar to accept the crown. When Caesar began to prepare for an expedition against the Parthians to avenge Crassus' death, rumours started to spread in Rome that only a king could conquer Parthia.

All this led to dissatisfaction not only among the people but also among a number of senators who regarded Caesar as a tyrant. A conspiracy was organised against him and on March 15th, 44 B.C. Caesar was murdered in the Senate, stabbed to death by a group of conspirators led by Brutus and Cassius. Twenty-three wounds were found in his body.

The Second Triumvirate

Unrest broke out after Caesar's murder. Public sympathy in Rome was against the conspirators, and Brutus and Cassius were obliged to flee the city. The virtual master of Rome after this was Mark Antony, one of Caesar's closest friends who had been elected consul in 44 B.C.

Soon afterwards a dangerous young rival appeared on the scene. This was Caesar's nineteen-year-old adopted son Octavian. At first Mark Antony treated him with scorn but Octavian

replied by concluding a temporary alliance with the Senate. Cicero put his eloquence at the service of Octavian and directed all the blows of his skilful oratory against the new tyrant Mark Antony.

The last chapter of the civil wars now opened. The Senate commissioned Octavian to take up arms against Mark Antony, who was defeated. While the Senate was making ready to celebrate its success, Octavian betrayed them and came to an agreement with Mark Antony and another well-known supporter of Caesar's, Lepidus, to set up a Second Triumvirate. This alliance (unlike the First Triumvirate) was officially recognised by the Popular Assembly. The triumvirs unleashed a reign of unprecedented terror—many thousands perished as victims of their proscriptions and one of the first of these was Mark Antony's implacable enemy, Cicero.

Meanwhile the former leaders of the conspiracy against Julius Caesar—Brutus and Cassius—had collected together a large army in the Balkans. The triumvirs set out against them and in the year 42 the two armies met near Philippi in Macedonia. In the battle which ensued Brutus and Cassius were killed in what represented a final defeat for the supporters of the former Senate republic.

As was the case with the First Triumvirate, so now once again serious friction arose between the triumvirs. Lepidus, indeed, never represented a force to be contended with, but Mark Antony who had set off for the East made an alliance with Cleopatra and set himself up not only as Roman governor but as a new autocrat, if not successor to Alexander the Great. He disposed of Rome's eastern territories as if they were his personal possessions making gifts of whole provinces to Cleopatra's children.

All these acts led up to the final split between Octavian and Antony. The Romans officially declared war on Cleopatra and in the autumn of 31 B.C. the Egyptian fleet was defeated at the battle of Actium. Soon afterwards Octavian's troops put in at Alexandria and Antony and then Cleopatra committed suicide. Thus Egypt, the last of the Hellenistic Mediterranean states, became part of the Roman state. Its sole ruler possessing unlimited powers was Octavian. The civil war was finally at an end.

On January 13th, 27 B.C. Octavian made a crafty move, hypocritically declaring in the Senate and the Popular Assembly that he was preparing to reject his emergency powers and "re-establish" the republic. However, the senators persuaded him to retain state power and bestowed on him the honorary title of Augustus. That day marked the beginning of the rule of Augustus Caesar, the first Roman Emperor. The republic had ceased to exist and the era of the Roman Empire had begun.

Chapter Eight

IMPERIAL ROME

THE EARLY PERIOD

The Principate of Augustus Caesar

Unlike Caesar his adopted father, Octavian strove to minimise the monarchic aspects of his power. He was a man of extreme caution and thrift, and referred to himself simply as "the first among equals" (*primus inter pares*) or "Princeps", since his name stood first on the list of senators. The political structure of the Roman state which took shape during Augustus Caesar's reign and which lasted throughout the early period of the Empire was called the Principate.

The Principate can be defined as a monarchy with the appearance of a republic. The Senate and all the republican state offices were preserved. Furthermore, Octavian demonstrated particular respect for the senators and had himself elected consul thirteen times. His approach to the pro-consuls and tribunes was similar and he took upon himself the office of high priest and adopted the honorary title of "Father of the Fatherland". Thus this restoration of the republican state structure was strictly formal since all state offices were concentrated in one man's hands. In addition to all this Augustus Caesar was declared commander-in-chief of the armed forces, and the traditional military title of *imperator* (Emperor) was included in his list of titles and names.

Under Augustus the Popular Assembly was gradually deprived of its significance. Augustus Caesar's policy with regard to the plebs can be summed up in the words "bread and circuses"—in other words, free bread was frequently distributed and lavish games and entertainments laid on as sops to the populace, while every effort was made to prevent them from participating in political life. Augustus drew his main support from the great landowners, not only of Rome but of the whole of Italy and from the Roman army.

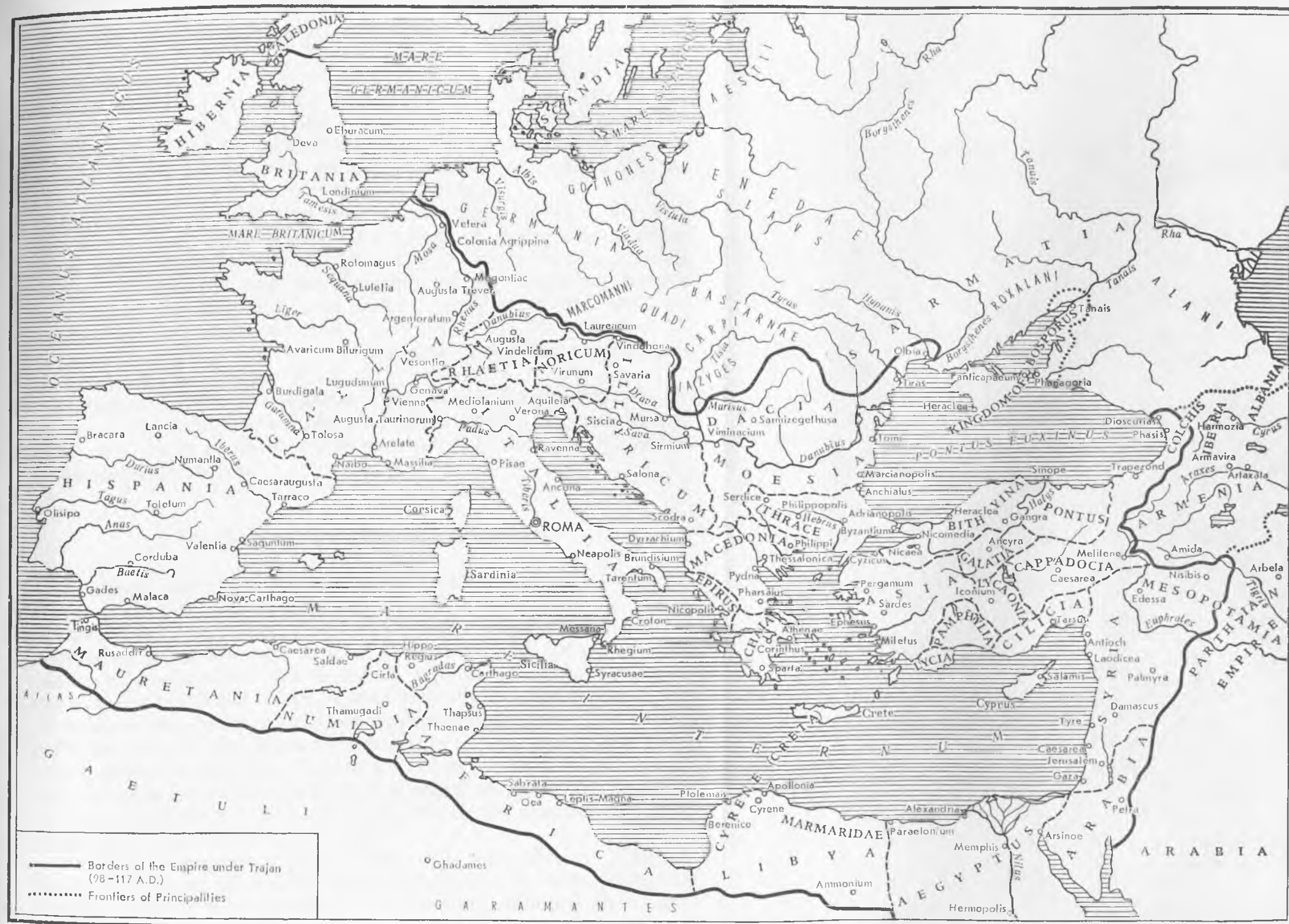
Eight ROME

Y PERIOD

Augustus Caesar

er, Octavian strove to minimise ver. He was a man of extreme to himself simply as "the first s) or "Princeps", since his name s. The political structure of the during Augustus Caesar's reign early period of the Empire was

d as a monarchy with the ap- e and all the republican state of- re, Octavian demonstrated par- and had himself elected consul the pro-consuls and tribunes was self the office of high priest and Father of the Fatherland". Thus a state structure was strictly for- concentrated in one man's hands. Caesar was declared commander- d the traditional military title of ed in his list of titles and names. Assembly was gradually deprived esar's policy with regard to the words "bread and circuses"—in equently distributed and lavish on as sops to the populace, while it them from participating in po- tain support from the great land- of the whole of Italy and from



ROMAN EMPIRE (1st and 2nd centuries A.D.)

Augustus Caesar introduced a number of measures to consolidate the system of slavery. A law was passed decreeing that in the event of a slave-owner's murder all the slaves of his household would be executed. Augustus also limited the number of slaves which could be granted their freedom and forbade the admission of freed slaves to the higher estates of society. As for the army, after the civil wars had come to an end Augustus cut down the number of legions considerably and set up the so-called Praetorian Guard, troops with special privileges who made up the Princeps' utterly reliable personal bodyguard.

Augustus Caesar's foreign policy was highly cautious. He preferred to extend Rome's power by means of diplomatic negotiations rather than by war. In this way he succeeded in gaining control of Armenia and the Kingdom of the Bosphorus. Roman penetration into Germany was at first fairly successful, until an uprising of the Germanic tribes took place. In the year 9 A.D. the insurgent tribes dealt a crushing blow to the Roman troops at the battle of Teutoburger Wald.

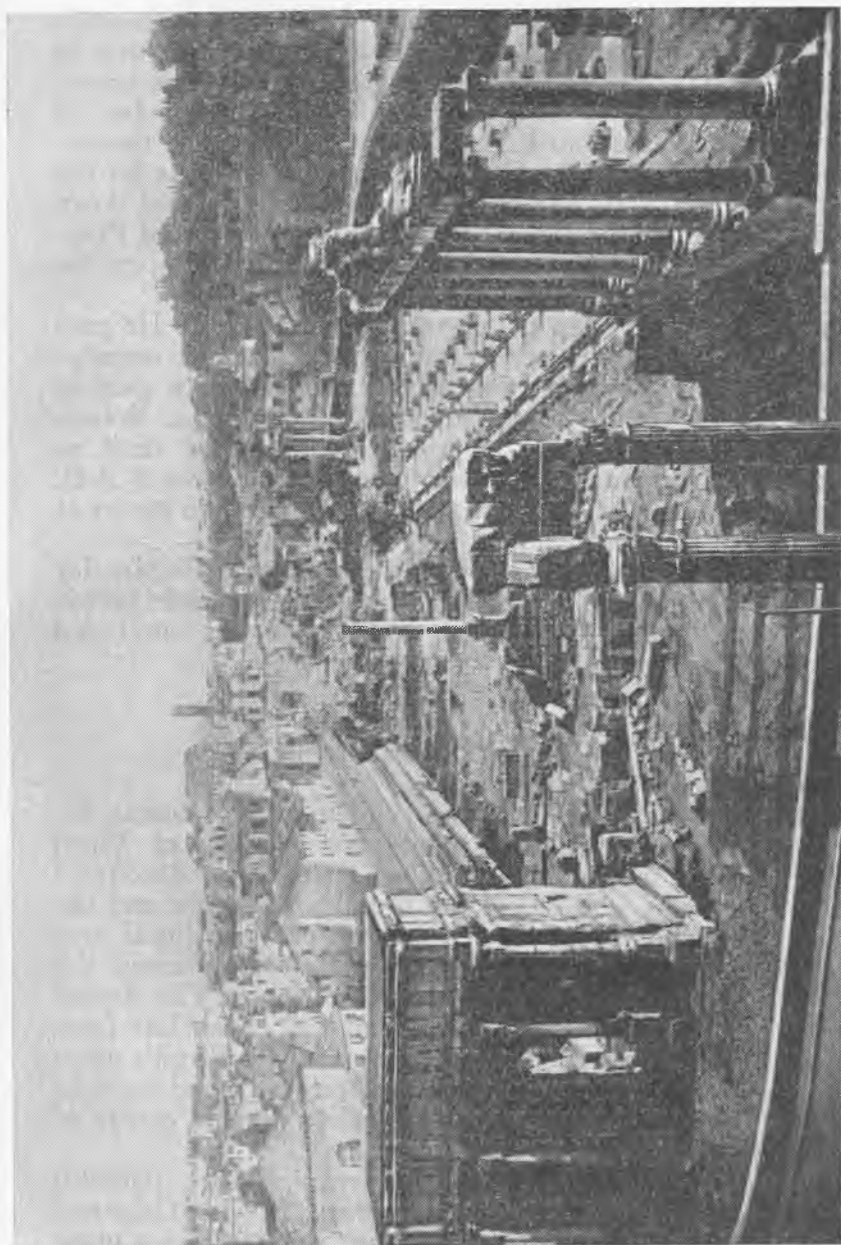
Augustus Caesar was supreme ruler of the Roman Empire for 45 years. He ordained that imperial power should be made hereditary, and when he died in the year 14 A.D. he was succeeded by his stepson Tiberius.

The Golden Age of Roman Literature

Augustus' reign coincided with the Golden Age of Roman literature. In this context mention should first be made of Virgil (Publius Virgilius Maro, 70-19 B.C.), who wrote the *Bucolics*—a cycle of ten poems which laud the beauties of nature and the merits of country life, the *Georgics*, a poem of agricultural precepts and a work still more famous than the aforementioned, the *Aeneid*, an epic poem in 12 books modelled on Homer. The *Aeneid* tells the story of the legendary ancestor of the Julian line from which Julius Caesar and Augustus were descended. Virgil's poem represents an artificial epos since it is based on myths and legends; its true significance is to be found in the thinly masked eulogy of Augustus Caesar as a man and ruler.

Another outstanding poet of this era was Horace (Quintus Horatius Flaccus, 65-8 B.C.), author of *Satires*, *Epodes*, *Odes* and *Epistles*. Horace was essentially a lyric poet, although in a number of his works a marked polemical strain is to be observed and like Virgil he sang the praises of Augustus. His famous poem *Exegi monumentum* (The Monument) has given rise to a whole crop of imitations even in modern times.

The third great poet of this period was Ovid (Publius Ovidius



The Roman Forum (from an early 20th-century photograph).
 Centre foreground—the columns of the temple of Vespasian. Left—the arch of Septimius Severus. Right—the columns of the temple of Saturn. Behind them—the ruined basilica of Julius. Background—the three columns of the temple of Castor and Pollux

Naso, 43 B.C.-17 A.D.). His early works consisted mainly of love poetry. The most famous of his poems are *Metamorphoses*, a poetic rendering of various myths, and *Fasti* in which ancient legends are arranged in the form of a Roman calendar including all the national holidays and festivals. In the year 8 A.D., for reasons which have not come down to us Ovid was exiled to a distant part of the empire where he ended his days. The works *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto* date from this period of his life.

In Roman scholarship of this period one of the most noteworthy figures was the historian Livy (Titus Livius, 59 B.C.-17 A.D.), author of a voluminous history of Rome in 142 books entitled *Ab urbe condita libri*, which eulogised the city's heroic past. Another outstanding figure was the scholar Pliny the Elder (first century A.D.), whose writings included the celebrated *Historia Naturalis*, in which he touched on various fields of the natural sciences—cosmography, botany, zoology, mineralogy, etc.

During the reign of Augustus architecture and the fine arts also flourished. The Roman forum (the central square) was rebuilt and a number of civic buildings and temples, including the famous Ara Pacis Augustae (Altar of Peace), were erected. Augustus himself was to point out on several occasions that he began his reign in a city of brick and left behind him a city of marble. Indeed, during his reign Rome grew considerably and gradually began to look more and more like the capital of a great empire.

The Roman Empire in the First Century A.D.

During the first century A.D. Rome was ruled over by emperors of the Julio-Claudian line, the most famous of whom was Nero (54-68 A.D.), a perverted, cruel character, responsible for the murder of his own brother and mother. Nero had no time for the Senate, and had many of the senators executed, making no effort to hide his despotic leanings. During his reign enormous sums were spent on the upkeep of the imperial court and he and his favourites lived in unprecedented luxury. Nero had a great love for music and singing, used to appear on the stage and even made a tour of Greece giving musical performances. In the year 64, an enormous fire broke out in Rome which lasted a whole week and laid waste 10 of the city's 14 districts. Rumours circulated among the populace to the effect that Nero himself had set the city on fire so as to be able to enjoy a rare spectacle. The emperor's cruelty and his macabre whims eventually provoked a revolt. The Praetorian Guard betrayed him and Nero was obliged to commit suicide. Before his death he is reputed to have exclaimed: "What an artist dies with me!"

With the support of his legions, Vespasian took power after Nero and founded the Flavian dynasty. Vespasian, who reigned from 69 to 79 A.D. had first made a name for himself as a military leader during the suppression of the revolt in Judaea which had broken out during the reign of Nero and lasted from 66 to 70 A.D. Vespasian was followed by his two sons, Titus and Domitian. During Titus' reign Mount Vesuvius erupted submerging the two towns of Pompey and Herculaneum in lava. These towns have since been excavated and have enabled us to gain a fairly clear picture of the life and customs of small towns of the Roman Empire.

Under the Flavian dynasty important changes began to take place in the Roman state. The emperors came to rely more and more on the provincial nobility and make room for an increasing number of its representatives in the Senate. In this way the major landowners not only of Rome and Italy but of the empire as a whole came to constitute the main bastion of imperial power.

The Roman Empire in the Second Century A.D.

In the second century A.D. the Roman Empire was ruled over by the Antonine dynasty. The most celebrated members of this dynasty were Trajan (98-117), in whose reign Rome made her last territorial acquisitions (the provinces of Dacia, Arabia, Armenia and Mesopotamia), Hadrian (117-138), who instead of seeking new conquests concentrated his attention on developing the administrative and bureaucratic apparatus necessary for the control of such an enormous empire, and finally Marcus Aurelius (161-180), famous for his philosophical writings. During the latter's reign the first signs of crisis appeared in the empire along with pressure from the barbarian peoples on the borders.

The second century is regarded as the Golden Age of the Roman Empire. It was the period of the empire's maximum territorial expansion. Its frontiers stretched from Scotland in the North to the Nile cataracts in the South, and from the shores of the Atlantic in the West to the Persian Gulf in the East.

However, the nature of the Roman state was not determined by these external factors alone. The society based on slave-holding had reached the peak of its development by this time. Most of the landed estates and craft industries were geared to a market economy and internal and external trade flourished. As a result, the slave-owners strove to squeeze all the profit they could out of their slaves, and did not refrain from using the most bestial forms of exploitation. The lot of the slaves was exceedingly cruel. For the tiniest misdemeanour they were incarcerated in

special prisons which existed on every estate, were made to work in fetters, beaten and put to death. The slaves were held in subjection by means of overt terror. On one occasion a noble Roman was killed by his slave: in accordance with the law introduced, as noted above, during the reign of Augustus, all his town slaves—in this case there were 400 of them—were liable for the death penalty. Although there was a likelihood that the people of Rome, indignant at this cruel measure, might rise up in protest, the sentence was nevertheless carried out and all 400 of the slaves were put to death.

The heyday of the Roman Empire was also marked by economic advances in the provinces and particularly in urban life there. In the towns of the western provinces (Gaul, Spain, etc.) there appeared numerous traders and artisans, united in *collegiae*, which served not only local trading centres but the most far-flung parts of the empire. In the East, trading also made important strides forward in Asia Minor and Syria. Furthermore, regular trade links were established with Arabia and India, and later even with China. From these sources came spices, perfumes, ivory and silk.

As a result of the new and expanding trade routes, many new towns were set up in places where detachments of the Roman army were stationed for lengthy periods. Various old towns also began to flourish at this time as well. As a rule, the town centres in the provinces enjoyed a limited degree of autonomy, having their own senates and officials.

However, the common people in the provinces chafed under the hardships of Roman rule. Land was taken away from the local peasants and given to the Roman settlers, while the former were more often than not thrown into debt slavery. The population in the provinces was subject to heavy taxation; military requisitioning was also a frequent practice. These factors combined lay behind the major uprisings which took place in some of the provinces, such as Gaul, Britain, and Africa in the first century, and Palestine in the second century. However, the Roman Empire at that time was still sufficiently strong to quell these movements, which did not represent a serious threat to its centralised power.

THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE EMPIRE

The Crisis of the Third Century

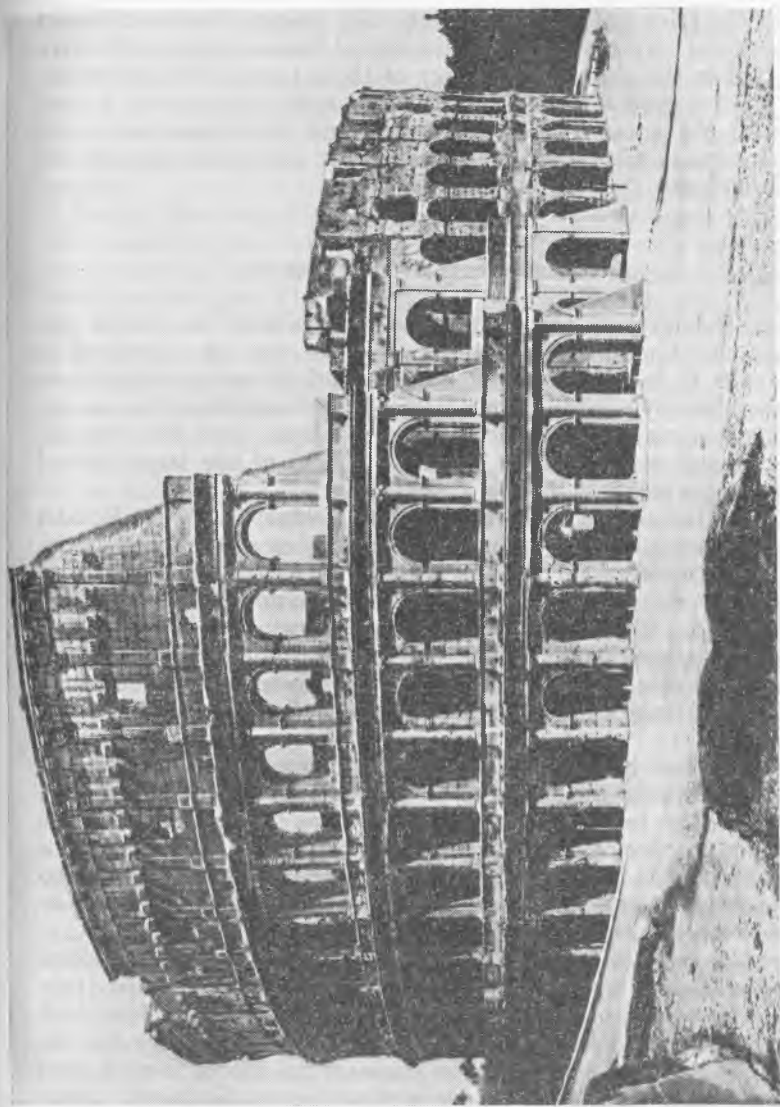
The Golden Age of the Roman Empire came to an end in the year 192, when the last emperor of the Antonine dynasty, Commodus, was slain at the hands of conspirators. After the struggle among various claimants to the throne, Septimius Severus

emerged the victor and reigned from 193 to 211 A.D. During his reign the empire acquired an openly martial character. Septimius Severus carried out a number of reforms in the army. For example, soldiers from the ranks were now given the right to continue serving and be promoted to become commanders and be admitted to the equestrian order. This measure opened before the soldiers wide vistas for both a military and a civilian career. It was no coincidence that in subsequent years there were to appear so-called "soldier emperors" and that rumours spread to the effect that Septimius Severus on his death-bed left instructions to his sons to "make the soldiers rich and not to pay any attention to the rest".

The Severine dynasty did not rule for long. After the last of those emperors had been murdered, for a short time power was in the hands of Maximinus, a former shepherd who had entered the army as a common soldier. However, he was soon murdered and after his death there began a rapid, sometimes almost kaleidoscopic succession of emperors, military revolts and coups. At the same time the pressure from the barbarian tribes at the frontiers of the empire increased. The Franks and the Alemanni invaded Gaul, the Saxons invaded Britain and the Moors swept into Africa, while a major barbarian alliance was taking shape among the various Gothic tribes in the countries bordering the Black Sea. Military confrontations with these barbarian tribes were made all the more difficult for the central government by the fact that at the same time they were obliged to curb disturbances at home. Rome soon lost a number of her Western provinces—Gaul, Britain and Spain. In the East there emerged the Kingdom of Palmyra, which after concluding an alliance with Persia gained control of almost all the empire's Eastern provinces.

This period was also marked by an intensification of the class conflict. In contrast with the movements of the second and first centuries B.C., the main role in the new uprisings was played not by the slaves but other groups among the exploited and dependent peasantry. But this does not mean that the slaves took no part at all in these movements. There were a number of uprisings in Africa and Asia Minor, but most important of all was the great revolt of the peasants and slaves in Gaul. The revolt spread far and wide and eventually reached as far as Spain. It had started in the sixties of the third century and with various intervals lasted over several decades.

Thus the Roman Empire was literally falling apart. The weakening of the central power, the wars on its frontiers, revolts at home—these were all social and political manifestations of a profound crisis.



The Colosseum (Flavian Amphitheatre) in Rome (75-82), as it stands today

But the crisis had roots that went still deeper, that were bound up with the very economic foundations of Roman society and were reflected in the changing ideology of those times. The disintegration of the economic basis of Roman society was closely bound up with the emergence of the *coloni* and the ideological crisis found expression first and foremost in the emergence and spread of Christianity.

The Emergence of the Colunate

Slave labour and an economy based on slavery no longer answered the demands of the times. A slave was not interested in the fruits of his labours and always worked under compulsion. It was almost impossible, or at least very complicated to ensure adequate supervision of vast masses of slaves, and this state of affairs acted as a brake on the development of the large landed estates organised on a basis of slave labour.

During the second half of the second century A.D. the Roman emperors were obliged to introduce a number of measures limiting to a certain extent the power and rights of the slave-owners. Prisons for slaves on individual estates were done away with and it was made illegal to keep slaves permanently in fetters. Furthermore, slave-owners were no longer allowed to put their slaves to death. In this way the state started to play a much more active role than before in relations between masters and slaves.

On the other hand, the slave-owners themselves started providing incentives for the slaves to work. Some hired out their slaves, allowing them to keep a part of their wages thus earned. A more common practice was to give slaves property in the form of a piece of land, a workshop or a shop. Thus a slave was able to carry on his own "business", paying his master a part of his income as a type of quit-rent.

But the most important new trend was the increasing number of *coloni*. *Coloni* was the name given to those people (usually free-men) who rented plots of land. The practice of renting land had long since existed but during the heyday of the estates run on slave labour it had not developed on anything approaching a mass scale. By now though the landowners and in particular the owners of the *salti* (large landed estates) had come to the conclusion that instead of employing many hundreds of slaves to till their lands it would be much more to their advantage to divide up their land into small plots and rent these out to the *coloni*.

In this way the new pattern of agricultural labour became increasingly widespread. By the end of the second century A.D.

the distinction between the *coloni* and the slaves possessing plots of land or freed slaves (possessing property rights) had almost disappeared. They were to an equal degree dependent on the owners of the *salti*, lived on separate farms or in villages which had their own workshops, shops and markets, where the tillers of the land used to sell their produce and purchase the goods they required.

During the critical period of the third century when town life had reached a point of stagnation and there was very little money in circulation, the owners of the large estates started to demand their rent in kind. The *colonus* was now obliged to give his master a set part of his harvest (usually a third) and work on the master's land for between six and twelve days a year. This marked the beginning of the bondage of the *coloni*, which was laid down and made law in the fourth century during the reign of the Emperor Constantine. The position of the *colonus* came to resemble more and more closely that of the serf. However, the work of the *colonus* in bondage was still an improvement on the work of the slave in a number of respects: the *colonus* who owned his instruments of labour looked after them more carefully, and since he was obliged to render to his master only a part of his produce he had a greater vested interest in the fruits of his labour. All these factors pointed to the fact that the slave-owner economy and the system of slavery had outlived its time and was bound to be replaced by a new, more efficient form of economy and labour. This was the crux of the profound economic crisis of the Roman slaveholding society.

Christianity

The Christian religion, which was the ideological expression of the crisis of the Roman Empire emerged in the first century A.D. but spread most rapidly from the end of the second century onwards. The old religion of the Romans with its numerous gods and goddesses, naive beliefs and rituals was no longer adequate to satisfy society's spiritual requirements. The cult of the emperors—a cult which the emperors themselves were held to lay great store by—was still worse equipped to fill this gap. For this reason a number of Eastern cults started to take root and gain popularity in Rome—that of the Egyptian goddess Isis, the Persian god Mithras and the Hebrew god Yahweh or Jehovah, and last but not least the Christian teaching.

The founder of this new religion was Jesus of Nazareth, who claimed to be the son of God and the saviour of mankind. The Christian story relates how he was accompanied by disciples,

worked miracles and preached to the people; he was later arrested and subjected to a painful and humiliating death on the cross. The legend goes on to tell how on the third day he rose again and ascended into heaven. Such was the story of Jesus Christ's life on earth as spread by the adherents of the new religion.

Christianity, which grew up in Palestine and spread to other towns and countries of the Roman Empire, attracted many adherents because of the simplicity of the way of life in the early Christian communities and the belief in a life after death. The Christian communities were joined predominantly by the poorer strata of the population: the poor peasants, freemen and slaves. This aroused extreme suspicion on the part of the imperial authorities, who proceeded to persecute the Christians. Nevertheless the new religion rapidly gained ground.

A new stage of its development began in the second century, when the Christian communities united under the leadership of the Roman community. The hierarchy of the new religious leadership became more complex—bishops appeared and the office of deacon was inaugurated for those in charge of the communities' economic affairs. The social composition of the communities also started to change; more and more members of the upper classes of Roman society became converts. In this way a powerful organisation gradually took shape, which was later to be known as the Christian Church. The Roman government and the emperors gradually came to understand that the new religion which called on men to be submissive, gave no thought to "the vanities of this world" and promised them reward in heaven for all their sufferings could become a useful tool in their hands.

For this reason the rift between church and state gradually closed and there is nothing surprising about the fact that Christianity eventually became the officially recognised state religion. The dividing line between the spheres of influence of church and state was defined: Christ was acknowledged as the King of Heaven and the Roman Emperor as the Empire's earthly ruler.

The Dominate

Despite the now critical state of affairs within the Roman Empire its rulers still succeeded in keeping the ship of state afloat for some time. Indeed, imperial power was consolidated; the state structure which was established in the latter period of the empire was known as the "Dominate" (a name derived from the word *dominus* meaning lord). This was a state of an openly monarchic character reminiscent of the eastern despotic states. All republican features which had been preserved during the

Principate were now abandoned. The Senate was now nothing more than the city council of Rome and court ritual developed along lavish oriental lines.

A further consolidation of imperial power took place during the reign of Diocletian (284-305), a talented organiser and clear-headed politician. Bearing in mind the separatist leanings of a number of provinces, Diocletian divided the empire into four parts and appointed three co-rulers or colleagues (the tetrarchy). In addition, the whole of the empire was divided up into 101 provinces and various groups of provinces were joined together in larger administrative units called *dioceses* of which there were twelve.

Apart from these administrative reforms Diocletian introduced a tax reform, setting up a unified per capita land tax and a fiscal reform, designed to restore the necessary equilibrium in the sphere of money circulation, and finally the famous edict on fixed prices. This edict was the first attempt at state regulation of prices for prime necessities and remuneration of labour ever to be made.

In the year 305 Diocletian abdicated, and although power still remained formally in the hands of his former colleagues, there inevitably appeared new claimants to the throne. Hostilities broke out between them which gave rise to yet another civil war. From this strife Constantine, the son of one of Diocletian's colleagues, emerged victorious and reigned from 306 to 337. Constantine had to struggle with his rivals for many years, and when at last he became sole ruler of the Roman Empire, he retained the division of the empire into four parts, although he did away with the tetrarchic system. Each of the tetrarchates was now ruled over by a prefect accountable to the emperor.

The title of "Great" was bestowed on Constantine by the Christian Church. This emperor was a calculating and crafty ruler, and yet at the same time a far-sighted politician. It was during his reign that the alliance between church and state took shape. Religious toleration was granted to the Christians by the Edict of Milan in 313. From that time on the church became a reliable ally and defender of imperial power, while the emperors became patrons of the church and enriched it with generous grants of land and money.

On May 11th, 330 Constantine transferred the capital of the Roman Empire eastwards to the shores of the Bosphorus. The ancient Greek colony of Byzantium was extended and rebuilt, and renamed Constantinople, in honour of the emperor. The transfer of the capital further east was no chance event: the Eastern provinces were richer and culturally more advanced than the Western ones and in practice the economic and cultural

centres of the empire had long been in the East. It was a perfectly logical step to transfer the political centre of the empire there as well.

After the death of Constantine, a struggle for the throne broke out once again. For some years power was in the hands of his son Constantius and then passed to his grandson Julian. The reign of the latter is memorable for the fact that Julian attempted to restore the old Roman religion, an undertaking which ended in complete failure.

The Fall of the Western Empire

A crucial event which contributed to the fall of the Roman Empire was a new great migration of peoples. The initial impetus for this migration was provided by the Huns, probably a nomadic tribe of Mongolian origin, who gradually advanced from the steppe of Central Asia to the shores of the Black Sea in search of pastures and new land. As they advanced, they partly conquered and partly ousted peoples of the Ostrogoth alliance (East Goths), who in their turn put pressure on the Visigoths (or West Goths). Seeking refuge from the Huns, the leaders of the Visigoth tribes turned to the Roman Emperor Valens with a request for permission to cross the Danube and settle within the empire. This permission was granted on condition that the Goths guarded the frontiers of the empire.

The Goths settled in the provinces of Moesia and Thrace, on the west bank of the Danube. However, their hopes of pursuing a peaceful and tranquil existence were soon cruelly dashed. Before long, Roman administrators and military commanders came to abuse their rights and freedom in all manner of ways. Their wives and children were seized and sold as slaves. Their food supply was inadequate and there were frequent outbreaks of famine among the Gothic tribes. These factors led to the outbreak of a revolt in the year 377. The revolt spread like wildfire and the Emperor Valens led the Roman army out to put it down. In the year 378 a great battle was fought at Adrianople which ended in a crushing defeat for the Romans, and in the course of which the emperor was killed.

The war with the Goths continued for a number of years. They were finally defeated only by one of Valens' successors Theodosius who reigned from 379 to 395. In his reign the eastern and western parts of the empire were reunited for the last time. Theodosius' reign also saw the final victory of the Christian religion, when it became not only the state religion but the only recognised one. Theodosius' edicts forbade sacrifices and decreed

that no more subsidies should be made to the Roman temples, whose land was then confiscated. In some cities of the empire such as Alexandria, massacres of the adherents of the old Roman religion were organised.

After the death of Theodosius, the empire was divided into two parts once and for all. The Eastern Empire, which came to be known as Byzantium, was to exist as a united state until the middle of the fifteenth century. The Western Empire, on the other hand, already weakened by internal crises, was unable to resist the increasing pressure from the barbarian tribes.

At the beginning of the fifth century the Goths attacked Rome. Led by Alaric, they invaded Italy and laid siege to the Eternal City. Famine soon broke out and the Senate started negotiations with Alaric. However, unsatisfied with the manner in which events were progressing, Alaric marched into Rome on August 24th, 410. The gates of the city were opened by the slaves who went over to the side of the conquerors.

The impact made by this conquest of the city was tremendous. It was the first time since the Gauls had sacked Rome at the very dawn of its history that the "Eternal City", the "light of the earth" had fallen into the hands of the barbarians.

The next fifty or sixty years were marked by an almost uninterrupted series of barbarian invasions of the Roman Empire and a number of barbarian kingdoms were even set up on Roman territory. In 429 the Vandals conquered the North African provinces, in the year 455 the Vandal King Genseric subjugated Italy and razed Rome to the ground, and in 449 Britain was invaded by the Angles, Saxons and Jutes. Meanwhile a great federation of barbarian tribes under the Hun ruler Attila was set up along the Danube. First of all the Huns ravaged the Balkan peninsula and then marched on Gaul. In 451 at Châlons the "battle of the nations" took place, when the Huns were defeated by a mixed army of Romans and barbarians—Franks, Goths and Burgundians. After this defeat Attila withdrew beyond the Rhine, but the next year he invaded northern Italy once more. However, soon afterwards he died (453) and the Hun alliance perished with him.

The Western Empire had virtually ceased to exist. Italy was devastated and Rome was no more than a provincial town. In the forum where once the fate of the world had been decided grass grew up and pigs were turned out to graze. The Western emperors were now insignificant pawns in the hands of the leaders of the barbarian armies. In the year 476, one of the latter—Odoacer, leader of the Germanic mercenaries, deposed the last emperor Romulus Augustulus and set himself up as regent of the Eastern Emperor in Italy. Thus even the formal existence of

the Western Empire had come to an end. The year 476 is conventionally held to mark the fall of the Western Roman Empire.

The Historical Significance of the Fall of the Western Empire

The historical significance of the fall of the Western Empire lies of course not in the fact that the last, and incidentally in no way remarkable, emperor was overthrown, but in the collapse of this enormous slave-holding society, of a state based on a slave economy. This type of political structure and economic system had now outlived its day and it was for this reason that the Roman Empire, already internally weak after the profound social crisis of the third century, was not able to avert the increasing pressure from its barbarian enemies. The economic basis of Roman society was already undermined by the third century when colonate system took root and gradually ousted slave labour. However, as a political unit the Roman Empire proved itself to be sufficiently strong to survive this crisis for the time being. A further one and a half centuries of class conflict within the empire and of constant pressure on its frontiers were required before the last citadel of the slave-holding society fell, and with it the slave economy and the power of the slave-owning nobles and landowners. In this lies the historical significance of the fall of the Western Roman Empire.

Part Two

THE MIDDLE
AGES

Many scholars use the term Middle Ages for the period between the fall of the Western Roman Empire (476 A.D.) and the fall of the Eastern Roman Empire or Byzantium in 1453. Others regard Columbus' discovery of America in 1492 as the event which marked the end of the period. However, all concur in placing the end of the Middle Ages not later than the last decades of the fifteenth century. The actual term Middle Ages took root in text-books and popular histories written by the humanists of the seventeenth century, who regarded their own time as the age of the rebirth of science and re-awakening of interest in the art of the classical period and called the interval between this Renaissance and classical times the Middle Ages (*medium aevum*), depicting it as a time of barbarian conquests, ignorance and superstition, a time of profound cultural decline.

Soviet historians apply the term Middle Ages to the period characterised by a specific social structure—feudalism. Feudal society, like the slave-holding society that preceded it, was a class society: it was based on the exploitation of the working population. Feudalism differed from the preceding social structure in that now the working people were no longer slaves but economically dependent on their masters, or in less fortunate cases serfs bound to members of the ruling class, the feudal lords.

Feudal society constituted a vital stage in the history of mankind, and in comparison with slave-holding society it was a progressive society. It is human labour that forms the basis of all material and spiritual culture and determines mankind's development and advance towards a brighter future. During the era of slavery, physical labour, the essential prerequisite for the

creation of the material conditions of existence, fell first and foremost to the lot of the slave, who hated his work and was kept at it only by means of the whip. During the crisis of the Roman Empire the slave-owners understood the need to interest the slaves in their work; they allowed them to have and till their own small plots and to have their own families. In this way the foundations were laid for the future feudal society.

In the feudal era the land belonged to the feudal lords, but they distributed it in small parcels to their "men", villeins or serfs who were obliged to work for their lord in return for their land or hand over to him a part of their produce. However, these serfs were always small farmers in their own right with their own families. Since in the majority of cases the amount of produce which the peasant owed his lord was laid down by custom, the serfs knew in advance that if they were to raise their level of productivity they would have more produce at their own disposal and thus be able to improve their family's living conditions. Thus it followed that the serf, unlike his slave predecessor, had a vested interest in raising his productivity. Herein is to be found the progressive aspect of feudal society, later to pave the way for the transition to a still more advanced, capitalist economy.

Chapter One

THE TRANSITION TO FEUDALISM AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE EARLY FEUDAL STATES IN EUROPE

In the initial period after the fall of the Roman Empire and the seizure of its territories by the barbarians a drastic cultural decline took place. Soon little trace was left of the outstanding achievements of classical art and science. The barbarians—Germans and Slavs*—were still living in primitive patriarchal communities and regarded war as a means of requiring all that they were as yet unable or incapable of creating with their own labour. They plundered towns and villages, took wealthy citizens prisoner and then demanded large ransom for them or did away with them before seizing their estates and pasture land; often they would compel the local population to pay them a third of their income. Rome itself was sacked and pillaged on more than one occasion.

Crafts and trade declined rapidly in the territories which had been seized by the barbarians, and the links between the towns of the Roman Empire (particularly in the former western provinces) and other countries soon disappeared. Each new wave of settlers evolved a self-sufficient agriculture and the Western Empire, which was gradually broken up into a number of barbarian kingdoms, came to consist of a large number of units with a natural economy.

It would be wrong, however, to suppose that all these fundamental changes were regarded as a scourge. The empire had burdened its citizens with heavy taxes, intolerable oppression from its never-ending army of administrative officials, the billeting of soldiers and cruel exploitation on the part of the local nobility

* The word "barbaros" was the Greek name for all peoples whose tongue was incomprehensible to them, and is perhaps itself an imitation of gibberish.

in the provinces working in the pay of the Romans. The local population often welcomed the barbarians as liberators, for however fiercely and sometimes cruelly they squared accounts with the local nobility they usually left the common people unharmed, set the slaves free and lifted the burden of the intolerable oppression of the imperial officials. One of the Romans living at the time of the fall of the empire, a certain Orosius, made the following comment on barbarian invasion: "The barbarians having put down their swords have now taken up ploughshares and started to treat the surviving Romans as comrades and friends. Among these Romans it is even possible to find those who prefer to live with the barbarians in poverty but retaining their freedom than under Roman rule and pay the heavy taxes."

The Social Structure of the Celtic and Germanic Tribes

To the north and east of the Roman Empire, in Central and Eastern Europe there lived numerous barbarian tribes. The Romans' closest neighbours were the Celts in Western Europe and the Germanic tribes in Central Europe. The Celtic tribes were soon driven back by the Germanic tribes. There was some intermingling between the two and at the present time the only extant Celtic peoples are the Irish, the Scots, and the Welsh and the Bretons in north-western France. The subsequent history of the remaining Celtic tribes is bound up with the history of the Germanic peoples. The Germanic tribes lived initially between the Rhine in the west and the Oder in the east. To the east of them lived the Lithuanians, the Finns and numerous Slavonic tribes who pressed them back westwards beyond the Elbe in the first centuries A.D. The Germanic tribes gradually settled throughout the West, occupying the whole of Western Europe and the British Isles. All these tribes were of a primitive patriarchal type and they were divided up into clan groups consisting of large family units.

Information about the Germanic tribes has been handed down to us by Julius Caesar who encountered them in the middle of the first century B.C. and the Roman historian Tacitus, who made a study of their way of life and mores in the latter part of the first century A. D.

The main occupation of the Germanic tribes at the time of Julius Caesar were hunting, fishing and stockbreeding, but, as Caesar noted, they showed little interest in crop cultivation. The large clan groups would settle on a piece of land, cultivate it communally and then share the produce between themselves. Yet

within the space of 150 years agriculture had come to be their main occupation and they started to divide the land up into "family" plots, each family unit consisting of three generations. Each of these families worked together on their common plot and individual ownership of land was not to be encountered among the Germanic tribes either in the time of Caesar or of Tacitus. If the land which they captured was covered with forest they would burn down the trees and then share the land up into family plots. They used primitive wooden ploughs, sowed the same ground several years in succession and then left it to lie fallow for years at a stretch, meanwhile either clearing new pieces of land or cultivating other patches previously cleared. Since the lands where they lived were vast and very thinly populated no clan group was ever short of land. However, such a state of affairs could not last for ever, and soon, in search for new lands, the Germanic peoples started to invade Roman territory which had long been under systematic cultivation.

These tribes lived in villages and each village was arranged on a communal basis. The arable land belonging to the village was divided up among the family groups and the pasture, woodland and meadows were commonland. The bulk of the population of each village consisted of free members of the tribe, who all enjoyed equal rights.

However, different ranks were soon to emerge in the barbarian communes. Clan and military aristocracies emerged. Representatives of these groups owned more land than the other ordinary freemen of the clan; they owned more livestock and occasionally had slaves. The slaves in these barbarian communes were obliged to work their master's land and give up a part of their own produce to their master. Yet the economy of these barbarian communes was not arranged on a slave-holding basis. The slaves lived together with their masters, helped them in their work, and Roman observers were astonished to note the relatively mild treatment they received. Tacitus stated quite clearly that in his time the Germanic people gave their slaves land, allowed them their own plots and homes and demanded from them in return only quit-rent—in other words, he added, the slaves of the barbarians lived like the *coloni* of Rome.

These communes were governed by elected representatives who met at assemblies of the whole tribe, village or district. At these assemblies important affairs were deliberated and legal proceedings were conducted. All male adult members of the communes not only worked the land but were warriors as well. The possession of weapons was regarded as the mark of a free member of the commune possessing full rights. The noble and rich members of the communes often gathered together bodies

of retainers and with the help of these small detachments made endless raids on neighbouring tribes, preferring, as Tacitus was to record, to gain through bloodshed what others gained in the sweat of their brow. These "nobles" recruited their retainers without taking into account which particular clan they happened to belong to, and this factor bore witness to the gradual disintegration of the clan structure of this primitive society. Sometimes konungr—kings—set themselves up from among the ranks of the aristocracy and then proceeded to unite a number of tribes under their rule and carry out large-scale military expeditions for the purpose of annexing new land.

Conquests of this type were particularly widespread during the period of the mass migration of the barbarian tribes between the third and fifth centuries which has gone down in history as great migration of the peoples, which resulted in the formation of a large number of barbarian states on the territory of the former Roman Empire.

In the fourth century a large union of barbarian tribes was set up on the Dnieper under the leadership of the Goths led by the chieftain Germanarix. This alliance was to fall prey to new barbarian tribes, nomads from the steppe-lands of Asia. These were the Huns, who shortly before had succeeded in invading China and laying it waste.

The Beginning of the Great Migration of the Peoples. The Formation of Barbarian Kingdoms

In the second half of the fourth century the Huns, after crossing the Volga, routed the alliance led by Germanarix and forced the Germanic tribes to move West. Some of the Goths, the West Goths or Visigoths, crossed the frontiers of the Eastern Empire (376) and settled on the territory of present-day Bulgaria. They were cruelly exploited by the imperial administrators and soon rose up in revolt, inflicting a heavy defeat on the Byzantine army. Byzantium was thus obliged to start negotiations with them and took some of them into her service, allowing them to settle in the western part of the empire. Here the Visigoths joined forces under the talented leader Alaric and proceeded to plunder the adjacent territory before marching on Rome in the year 410 and pillaging the city for six days. Soon afterwards Alaric withdrew into southern Italy, where he died. In accordance with a treaty concluded with Byzantium his descendants were given lands between the river Garonne and the Pyrenees. There they settled and gradually extended their power southwards to the whole of Spain. In this way the first barbarian kingdom incorporating south-west France and Spain came into being (419).

The Huns, after conquering the Goths in the fourth century, did not remain long on the banks of the Dniester where they had first settled. In the fifth century they gained a resolute and ruthless leader in the figure of Attila, who gathered a large army of Huns and many Germanic tribes and marched westwards. He invaded the Balkans on a number of occasions laying Byzantine lands waste and obliging the emperor to pay him large tribute money. In 450 Attila embarked on an expedition to the West and although he succeeded in devastating the land of the Belgae his march was halted by united Roman and barbarian forces, who defeated him in a battle on the Catalaunian plains (near Châlons-sur-Marne) in the year 451. Although Attila and his remaining troops continued to sack various towns in northern Italy he was not to embark on any new conquests. His empire disintegrated after his death in 453 and the Huns gradually mingled with the local population.

The march of the Huns into Central Europe forced other Germanic tribes to move on in search of new lands. Forced out of southern Spain by the Vandals, the Goths crossed into North Africa, set up a state there and lived by plunder and piracy in the Mediterranean. In 455 they captured Rome and looted it for two whole weeks. The Burgundians gradually settled the whole of the Rhone valley and the Franks advanced from the Rhine estuary as far as the river Schelde from whence they succeeded in conquering the whole of northern Gaul as far as the river Loire. About the year 449 the Germanic tribes of the Angles, Saxons, Jutes and Thuringians invaded Britain and set up a number of barbarian kingdoms, which were eventually (by the ninth century) to be united as England. Meanwhile in 493 the Ostrogoths conquered Italy under the leadership of King Theodoric.

Although Byzantium succeeded in subduing the Ostrogoths and uniting Italy with the rest of the Empire (555), the Italians who had first greeted the Byzantine troops as liberators soon started to miss the barbarians, since once again they became the victims of cruel taxes and a completely arbitrary bureaucracy. Therefore, it is not surprising that when thirteen years later, in 568, a new Germanic tribe, the Lombards, invaded Italy they had little difficulty in gaining control of Italy and this time for good. The historian Paulus Diaconus writes that at that time many noble Romans fell victim to the insatiable greed of the Lombard dukes, while the remainder were obliged to pay a third of their income to the barbarians.

To the east of the Germanic tribes there lived a large number of Slavonic tribes. They consisted of three main groups—the West, East and South Slavs. The West Slavs occupied the basins

of the Vistula, Oder and Elbe rivers. The Czech and Moravian tribes lived in the upper reaches of the Elbe, Polish tribes on the Vistula and the Oder and the Pomeranian tribes along the southern coast of the Baltic. The Slavs of this period, like the Germanic tribes, lived in primitive communes. Classes and states took shape among the Slavonic tribes later than with the Germanic tribes.

In the ninth century a large Slav kingdom was set up under the name of Moravia, but it was to be short-lived. In the year 906 this state was under pressure from the Germans in the west and nomadic pastoralist Finno-Ugrian tribes in the east. One part of the Moravian kingdom, Bohemia, retained its independence and was later to become part of the Holy Roman Empire, as Germany was to be called from the twelfth century onwards. In the eleventh century the Czech prince took the title of King of Bohemia and his kingdom, although part of the Holy Roman Empire, enjoyed a large degree of independence.

In the tenth century the Slavonic tribes in the Vistula and Oder valleys set up a large Polish state. The small states set up by the Pomeranian and Polabian tribes (Laba is the Slav name for the Elbe) did not maintain their independence for long, but fell prey to foreign conquerors in the twelfth century. The East Slavs who lived to the east of the Poles set up a large Russian state in the ninth century.

The South Slavs started as early as the sixth century to infiltrate Byzantium south of the Danube. At the end of the seventh century, Slavonic tribes who inhabited the lower reaches of the Danube were subjugated by Turkic tribes, the Bulgars, who soon joined forces with the more civilised conquered peoples and set up a powerful Bulgarian Kingdom. In the ninth century this kingdom held the larger part of the Balkan peninsula and constituted a threat to Byzantium itself. However, at the beginning of the eleventh century Byzantium succeeded in defeating the Bulgars. In the twelfth century the Bulgarian state won back its freedom but in the fourteenth it fell prey to the Ottoman Turks under whose yoke it remained until the nineteenth century.

The central reaches of the Danube were inhabited by Serbo-Croatian tribes who in the sixth and seventh centuries, after crossing the Danube, set up a number of small kingdoms in the central part of the peninsula. However, these were annexed in the eleventh century by Byzantium, and it was not until the second half of the twelfth century that a powerful Serbian state was set up, which in 1389 was defeated by the Turks at the battle of Kossovo Field and together with other Slavonic tribes was to remain under Turkish rule for many centuries.

Byzantium from the Fourth to Seventh Centuries A.D.

In the year 395 A.D. the final break between the Eastern and Western Roman Empires took place and Byzantium became a separate state. Its name was taken from that of the ancient Greek colony on the site of which the new capital of Constantinople had been built. The Byzantines referred to themselves as the Rhomaioi and their state as the "Empire of the Rhomaioi". The population of Byzantium was extremely heterogeneous, including Greeks and many tribes and Hellenised peoples of the East. However, the predominant language was Greek, which in the seventh century became the official language.

Byzantium succeeded in stemming the process of disintegration which had befallen the Western Empire as a result of the collapse of the economy based on slave labour. The secret of the vitality of Byzantine Empire lay in its social and economic structure. Less wide use was made of slave labour in agriculture (i.e., on the estates of the large landowners) than in the Western Empire. The slaves had long been allowed to possess their own implements and even their own small plots of land, without which they could not be sold. In other words the slave occupied virtually the same position as the *colonus*.

Agriculture based on *coloni* holdings had taken much firmer root in Byzantium than in the Western Empire. The renting of land, particularly on a long-term basis, had also become a common practice, and land tenure gradually became hereditary. Many more small free-holdings and independent peasant communes survived in Byzantium than in the Western Empire.

Another factor which favoured the stability of Byzantium was the much smaller number of barbarian invasions to which her rich lands were subjected. Her large cities and trade centres, in particular Constantinople on the Bosphorus, Antioch in Syria and Alexandria in Egypt, assured the empire wide commercial links and possibilities for expanding her export trade. Another important advantage Byzantium enjoyed was her role as a trade link between Europe and the countries of the East.

The fourth, fifth and sixth centuries were marked by the gradual disappearance of the slave-holding society and the gradual but steady development of feudal relations in Byzantium. While in the west the barbarian invasions had led to a collapse of the former military and bureaucratic apparatus, in Byzantium feudalisation progressed within the framework of the former centralised power structure. The evolution of the former slave-owners as powerful feudal landowners was not accompanied by any alterations in the centralised bureaucracy, which provided an ideal basis for the despotic state structure.

As the individual feudal lords consolidated their new position and their power in the provinces, the imperial government took steps to limit their influence as far as possible. They were forbidden to have private armies and to build prisons on their estates. The government also attempted to preserve intact the social hierarchy of the slave-holding era, although it was obliged in a number of cases to permit the transfer of slaves to the position of *coloni*. This reactionary role of the state as it strove to bolster a system which already belonged to the past came particularly clearly to the fore during the reign of Justinian I (527-565). This ruler was an outstanding politician and statesman, in whose reign Byzantium rose to the zenith of its power. The Code of Civil Law (*Corpus juris civilis*) drawn up at Justinian's instigation defined the emperor's practically unlimited powers, protected the privileges of the church and private property, and confirmed the existing state of affairs, by which the slaves and *coloni* were deprived of all rights.

Justinian's policies aroused serious discontent among various sections of the population. A wave of uprisings swept several parts of the empire. A particularly serious one was the uprising in Constantinople itself which was to acquire the name of "Nika" (Conquer!). After crushing this uprising, Justinian turned his attention to wide-scale plans in the sphere of foreign policy. The successes he scored in Italy, Spain and Africa soon proved to rest on sand. In the reign of his immediate successors Byzantium was to lose its numerous conquered territories. In addition, the territory of Byzantium itself was invaded by barbarians: in the seventh century Syria, Palestine, and Egypt were conquered by the Arabs.

Barbarian Society

When the barbarian leaders settled on newly conquered territory or lands they had won back from the Romans, they naturally brought with them their customs and communes. However, the previous inhabitants of the conquered lands had belonged to class societies: together with the free Romans there were slaves and *coloni*, and the administration of such a society required measures unlike those relied on earlier, which in the new circumstances proved inadequate. As we shall see later, barbarian society was soon to lose its cohesion and develop a class character. All these developments taken together brought about changes in barbarian society which paved the way for the formation of states. The conquerors needed troops, administrative, legal and other organs, which appeared when the need arose for a more complex administration above all in order to hold the conquered

peoples in subjection, collect tribute from them and maintain law and order in a society, which was already composed of exploiters and exploited.

The gradual disappearance of the equality inherent in the primitive communes was inevitably to lead to changes in barbarian society, transforming it from a society of primitive communes into a feudal society.

What was this process of feudalisation and how did it take place in the new barbarian states? The first part of the question can be answered quite briefly. The land was taken over by the feudal lords, while the working people became dependent on them: once they started working as serfs they were obliged to place their labour or part of their produce at the disposal of the feudal lords. The feudal lords' ownership of the land, the feudal dependence of the working people and their obligation to pay the ruling class quit-rent—such were the social phenomena which resulted from the process of feudalisation. How now did it come about?

When barbarian tribes, led by their leader and his army conquered new territory, the leader would divide much of the land among his retainers, who were often allotted the large estates of the Roman nobles, complete with slaves and *coloni*. The other free members of the tribe received land according to the land rights they had enjoyed in their original settlements. Clan units had lived in village communes: each large family unit had enjoyed hereditary ownership of a holding, consisting of their dwelling complete with an enclosure for their livestock and a strip of arable land; the remaining land of the commune—woods, pasture, waste land and water—formed commonland. The large family units gradually split up into smaller units and the holdings were divided up accordingly. The head of each small family unit became the owner of his holding with hereditary rights and was entitled to use all the village commonland. These small farmers who were initially independent soon lost their land and freedom, and became dependent peasants or serfs in the service of the large landowners.

At the time of the large-scale migrations of the barbarian tribes and the foundation of the first barbarian states, and later, when the barbarians came to settle in new territory and take over large landed estates, the free commoner was often unable to find support and protection among the fellow-members of his original commune, which by this time had become weakened and disorganised. Nor could he hope for it from the leader of his tribe, now the king of a newly formed barbarian state, for the kings now ruled large territories and distance tended to make them inaccessible. The small farmer of those times was obliged

to seek protection from the powerful men in his own district and these were more often than not the former members of the tribal leader's armed retinue who had been allotted large estates by him, or simply rich men with their own armed retainers who seized land at their own risk and expanded their estates by purchasing the plots of free commoners. Once land was subject to individual property rights and could be bought and sold, the formation of large landed estates, on the one hand, and the appearance of subsistence plots and landless peasants, on the other, were only a question of time. Such was the process which took place in barbarian society when new states were being set up on conquered territories.

The Emergence of Feudal Relations in Western Europe

The small farmers who sought protection and patronage of the rich and nobility were eventually granted this protection and patronage but at the price of losing their freedom. If they owned no land, they would be granted small strips and sometimes a few animals and sheds to keep them in. But they were obliged to pay for this either by working for their masters (*corvée*) or with part of their produce (*quit-rent*). In some cases material assistance granted defenceless small peasants was so great that they bound not only themselves to the service of their new masters, but their descendants as well. Since the living conditions of the free commoners from the former barbarian villages were more or less on a level, this subjugation to the large landowners and wealthy members of society was to become a universal practice.

Some peasants who had their own farms and sufficient land to make a reasonable living still chose to enter the service of the wealthy and noble in their desire to gain their protection and patronage at all costs. They gave up their rights to their land and handed it over to their new masters, receiving it back again complete with obligations of tenure as if it had never been theirs. Thus the land now became a holding and its former owner a lease-holder. Rich landowners such as the Catholic church and foundations such as monasteries, charterhouses, etc., readily afforded assistance and patronage to the small farmers, who gave up their land to them, only to receive it back again in the form of lease-holdings. The monasteries often returned the holdings to their former owners with an additional small piece of land—usually part of a wood or marsh—under condition that it be prepared (by cutting down the trees or draining the marsh) for sowing. Gradually the inhabitants of the former village com-

munes, small farmers, who worked their own land and had hitherto been freemen, now became dependent peasants or serfs, bound to the land and to the service of large landowners.

However, more than this was involved in the process. The large landowners gradually acquired new rights over the local peasant population. Since roads were bad and long journeys involved much danger, it was often more or less impossible for a peasant to turn to the king for a just settlement in a conflict of interests between himself and a powerful local lord. Thus, the rich—and this meant first and foremost the powerful feudal lords—gradually became the wielders of justice, and eventually all administrative power, in the confines of their large estates.

In order to consolidate their gains, the feudal lords sought from their king special charters according them the rights they had already seized. These charters were known as immunity charters and the new power accorded to the owners of such charters was known as immunity. The word *immunis* in Latin means exempt, and these charters made the landowners' property exempt from the control of the king and his administrative officials. An immunity charter gave landowners legal and administrative powers over the whole of their property and often outside its confines, since the barbarian states were weak and badly organised.

Central and local administration in the real sense of the word did not exist and kings were only too glad to hand over their functions to local lords. This additional power obliged the lords to attend local assemblies of the commoners, where legal proceedings were usually conducted, in order to preside over the maintenance of law and order in a given area. In other words, they were allotted state administrative and legal functions. By way of reward for these services the feudal lords received the revenue gathered in the lands they administered: fines for legal offences, the right to demand from all the common people living within their jurisdiction any kinds of services—to repair roads, build bridges, ferries and even castles and fortifications. In return for the maintenance of law and order at markets, mills, etc., the king and his officers instituted market, road, ferry and bridge tolls which were gathered in by the landowners in possession of immunity charters.

Furthermore, local leaders received yet a further opportunity which helped to entrench their privileges extremely firmly and over an exceedingly long period. The armies drawn from the common people which followed their leaders out to battle and on campaigns of conquest gradually started to play a less important role. Contact and actual encounters with the Roman troops and an overall advance in military technique made inevitable the

introduction of metal weapons and armour. The need for cavalry besides infantry detachments also made itself felt, and horses required metal armour just like their riders. These innovations were to prove very costly: a full suit of armour cost 45 cows, in other words a whole herd of cattle. Obviously, therefore, armour was an impossible luxury for the ordinary small farmer from the village communes. For this reason universal military service was soon to become a thing of the past.

As time went on the troops in the new barbarian states came to consist more and more of rich subjects who were able to arm themselves in accordance with the requirements of new military techniques. Thus the kings of these new states naturally made liable for military service either those subjects who were already prosperous or others whom they made so by granting royal favours to their own retainers or the local rich in the form of land together with tenant farmers, in return for which they were obliged to appear complete with horse and armour when required. The land distributed to subjects in this way was called a feud and those that received feuds came to be known as feudal lords.

At first the feudal lords held their land only so long as they were able to carry out their military obligations, but very soon the land granted to them became their hereditary property, and their military obligations were inherited by their descendants as well.

So it was that a new ruling class of feudal lords took shape—a class of warrior landowners with large estates (in comparison to the peasants' small parcels) who within the confines of their own property carried out all the functions of state power. The vast masses of actual producers—the peasants, dependent on these feudal lords—were obliged to pay them for their parcels of land either in the form of *corvée* or quit-rent, and also to perform various duties and pay various levies to the landowners in their capacity of local representatives of state power.

The political structure of the new society also underwent significant changes. During the era of the primitive commune and classless barbarian society no states had existed. The basic social organ of the barbarians had been a popular assembly, an assembly of elders, which had resolved all the important affairs of the tribe, questions of war and peace, legal deliberations, the maintenance of law and order. The power of the tribal leaders—dukes or kings—was elective and not coercive, as was often the case in more developed societies, and depended on the authority commanded by the individual candidates and the trust placed in them by the members of the tribe.

State structures took shape during the various conquests, since the subjection of conquered peoples required force and coercion,

which could not be provided effectively by the earlier structure of barbarian society. In practice state organs which exerted the necessary force and coercion in the barbarian states were initially the kings and their retinue.

The Empire of Charlemagne

An example of the way in which barbarian states were set up at that time can be seen in the formation of the Frankish state during the reign of Charlemagne (768-814). The Kingdom of the Franks had no capital in the modern sense of the word. The centre of the state was wherever the king and his retinue happened to be. The king travelled about his kingdom, occupied by the Frankish tribes, together with his retinue from one landed estate to another, where stores of food and other vital supplies were to be found in sufficient quantities to satisfy the needs of his court and his retinue after all that could be duly levied in the form of tribute and taxes from the local population had been gathered in. These tours of the king and his court also served to define the territorial limits of the state, for all those who agreed to pay the king were considered his subjects and the land on which such subjects lived was considered part of his kingdom. Clearly defined frontiers were seldom to be found in barbarian states. In practice their frontiers were the confines in which the king and his retinue exercised their authority by collecting tribute and taxes. One must beware of being misled by the enormous size of Charlemagne's empire into drawing false conclusions as to its nature.

Charlemagne's predecessors Charles Martel (715-741) and his son Pippin the Short had been obliged to reckon with the Arab conquests in Europe. Charles Martel had been extremely hard pressed to it to beat back the attack of the Arabs against the Frankish Kingdom (the battle of Poitiers, 732). The experience of this battle obliged the Frankish kings to improve their army.

This concern found expression not only in subsequent improvements in military equipment but also in the more frequent grants of land and peasants to all those who might rally to the king's banner in times of war. Those who were capable of taking on such obligations came from the prosperous strata of society whose members had been able to enhance their wealth by receipt of so-called benefices. These benefices soon became hereditary, and thus the mass-scale distribution of benefices during the reign of Pippin led to a numerical increase and consolidation of the ruling class of powerful warrior landowners, on whom the small farmers

inhabiting the land which had been made their benefice now became dependent.

The considerable increase in the size of the ruling class enabled the Carolingian kings to pursue an active foreign policy and sally forth far beyond the frontiers of the land inhabited by the Franks to subjugate other Germanic tribes. In this way Charlemagne succeeded in extending his power over an enormous area which included present-day France, northern Spain, northern Italy and a large part of western Germany.

In the year 800, the Pope crowned Charlemagne Emperor and proclaimed his kingdom an empire. In reality this empire was only a loose temporary union of many lands which had been defeated by a successful conqueror: between these lands there were no really firm ties and the empire disintegrated soon after the death of its founder.

This disintegration came about not only because of the fact that the empire was peopled by different tribes, who broke away after Charlemagne's death and started to set up separate independent dukedoms like those that had existed prior to their conquest. The underlying reasons for this disintegration lay in the very nature of feudalism as a socio-economic and political system. In order to understand the nature of that society it is important to have a clear idea of the structure of its nucleus—the feudal estate—which was to provide the foundation of feudal society for many centuries, from the time of its first emergence right up to its collapse in the conflagration of bourgeois revolutions.

The Development of Feudal Relations in the Early Middle Ages

By the beginning of the eleventh century the process of feudalisation was complete throughout the whole of Europe, i.e., all or almost all the land was in the hands of feudal lords, whereas all the working people were to a greater or lesser degree dependent on this ruling class. The hardest form of dependence was that of the serfs, who together with their descendants were bound to the service of their lord and to his land. This meant that the serfs were obliged to work on their overlord's estate and till his land, hand over to him part of their own and their family's produce (not only farm produce such as corn, meat and poultry but also craft products such as cloth and leather). In other words the serf was obliged not only to feed his master, his master's family and household but also to see that they were clothed and shod as well. All these obligations and gifts were referred to as

quit-rent and were rendered in return for the right to work the master's lands, which the latter put at the disposal of the peasants or villeins as they came to be known.

The feudal estate which was run on the pattern outlined above and which formed the nucleus of feudal economy and society was known in Russia as a *votchina*, in England as a manorial estate and in France and the rest of Europe (since the French pattern was taken as a model) as a seignior. To understand the essential features of feudal relations and the structure of feudal society it is important to gain a clear picture of the way in which the seignior was run and the way in which this socio-economic unit was to influence social and political relations in the Middle Ages.

The Seignior

The seignior was the basic unit of feudal society and the feudal mode of production and for that reason it exerted a decisive influence on society and patterns of political organisation and cultural development as a whole. In the Middle Ages all land, with rare exceptions, belonged to the ruling class of feudal lords who owned estates of varying sizes. The ownership of these estates differed from bourgeois ownership in that it was made subject to various conditions. Each feudal landowner was considered to have received his feud from a seignior of higher rank whose domain had originally been bestowed on him by the king, and he was obliged in return to rally complete with a horse and a suit of armour whenever his seignior should see fit to call on his services. Thus he was his seignior's vassal and had a number of obligations towards his liege-lord apart from military service: he was obliged to contribute his property towards the ransom for his liege-lord if the latter should be taken prisoner; he was obliged to bestow presents on his seignior if the latter's eldest son were admitted to Chivalrous Order or if his elder daughter were given away in marriage; he had to assist at the liege-lord's court during legal proceedings, etc. If a vassal failed to fulfil these duties to his seignior the latter was at liberty to deprive him of his feud.

The estates of the feudal landowners were divided into two parts: there was the domain belonging personally to the lord of the manor and which was worked by the serfs by way of quit-rent and also the serfs' own holdings. Each serf owned a strip of land which he worked independently with his own tools and draught animals. These strips provided the peasant with enough produce to keep himself and his family and the wherewithal to pay the lord of the manor quit-rent when the latter had to be paid wholly or partly in produce. However harsh the conditions

of vassalage binding on the peasant, he was always able to work his own holding independently and the leaders of the serfs' commune arranged how the domain be sown and what rotation of crops be followed. This meant that the serfs were economically independent of their liege-lord, their own masters, from whom the landowner could receive quit-rent by means of non-economic coercion, either direct or disguised.

There were various forms of non-economic coercion: the serf's personal dependence on his liege-lord; the serf's dependence on his liege-lord for his land (it was accepted that the whole of a landowner's estate including the serfs' holdings belonged to the lord of the manor); finally the serf's dependence on the liege-lord as representative of the state's legal and administrative power. Since the feudal lords were not only landowners but also warriors and knights, this meant that they had sufficient means at their disposal to compel the serfs to fulfil their obligations whenever necessary.

The mediaeval economy both in agriculture and, as we shall see later, in industry, was characterised by small-scale production. Agricultural implements were small, designed for individual use, and the same applied to those used by artisans. Thus the material basis of all mediaeval culture was first and foremost peasant labour and a peasant economy, that is, the small-scale holding of the small independent producer in the villages and, at a later stage, the small-scale undertakings of the artisans in the towns.

The ruling class took no direct part in the production process at all and its positive role at the outset of the feudal era consisted solely in the fact that since the landowners were also warriors they protected the holdings of the small producers from plunder by the followers of other landowners and foreigners, and maintained basic law and order within the country which was an indispensable condition for any regular production. On the other hand the feudal landowners protected and consolidated the system of exploitation typical of the feudal economy.

Since all material benefits necessary for man's everyday life were produced in small holdings, the owners of which were economically independent of their seigniors, this meant that by working harder the peasants could obtain a surplus over and above the vital produce for themselves and their families and that which was due the lord of the manor. Therein lay the tremendous progress of the feudal order as compared to slave-holding society.

Slaves worked their master's land using their master's tools and means of production and then handed over all the fruits of their labours to their master, receiving in exchange only that which was absolutely necessary for their subsistence. The slave

hated his work and tried to do as little as possible, and would often break his tools and cripple his master's draught animals in revenge for his violated human dignity.

The mediaeval serf on the other hand, however hard his lot may have been, worked his own independent holding and had a vested interest in raising his level of labour productivity. As a result, feudal society, although built upon the ruins of the slave system and the high cultural achievements of the preceding era, proved capable of more fruitful although extremely gradual development.

Wars in Feudal Society

The power of feudal lords depended on the number of vassals they had paying them quit-rent. For this reason, the lords of the manor were always trying to increase the number of their vassals, i.e., peasants and town-dwellers in their service, and the easiest way to do this was to take away vassals of their neighbours, other feudal lords like themselves. Thus, local wars among the seigniors were a permanent feature of the Middle Ages. These wars were accompanied by the burning down of whole villages and towns and massacres of the common people, i.e., all those methods which undermine society's productive forces. It would have been possible to avoid this if the individual lords had observed the codes of law and order obtaining in unified and centralised states. Yet such states were not to be found in the early Middle Ages. The economic factors which led to the disintegration of the barbarian kingdoms into landed estates or seigniories also brought about the decline of the barbarian states. The individual seigniories came to represent centres of political life once they had become the centres of the economic life of feudal society, made up as it was of two main classes. The feudal lords became not only landowners but they also came to represent state power for those living in their domains.

As the landed estates came to grow in size, the barbarian kings' retainers, once they had received land, and the local nobility after they had grown rich and afforded their protection to the former independent small farmers, took upon themselves the right to judge and mete out punishment to the local common people when law and order were infringed and as warriors they took upon themselves the right to recruit bands of armed retainers. The kings were not powerful enough to prevent the local nobles increasing their powers in this way, and in some respects even encouraged their ambitions, since the only way of rewarding the members of their retinues and their loyal servants when a natural economy was the order of the day and trade was as yet poorly

developed, was to grant them land and permit them the right to gather taxes and dues in kind from the local population for their own profit. In this way the powerful landowner within the confines of his land was not only a landowner but also a ruler, that is the individual invested with administrative and legal powers, as far as the commoners working in his particular seigniorie were concerned.

The Feudal Hierarchy

At that period there were still kings but real power belonged to local landowners. The most powerful feudal lords who had received their estates direct from the king regarded themselves as the king's equals, his peers, although they were known as his servants or vassals. Less powerful landowners who had not received their feuds directly from the king but from great nobles were vassals of those same lords and bound to their service. Those with the smallest landed estates were knights and in their turn bound as vassals to more powerful lords. The whole of the ruling class was composed of a complex hierarchical pyramid; at the top there was the king, lower down came the titled lords (such as dukes, earls and the abbots of leading monasteries), then came the barons and last came the ordinary knights. All these groups were united by a common interest in exploiting the working people, and during the early Middle Ages this common interest was sufficient to ensure the peasants' obedient fulfilment of their obligation to feed, dress and shoe the ruling class. Therefore, at that time no other social patterns existed. While the unity of a barbarian kingdom, even such a large one as Charlemagne's Empire centred round the king's retinue, sooner or later these states disintegrated and were divided up into a number of seigniories, the owners of which were bound to one another in vassalage and finally to the king himself. In practice the king's role was of comparatively little significance, since each lord had direct dealings with his immediate superior whose requirements he was obliged to heed. In the Frankish kingdom, where the feudal social patterns were particularly clearly defined, the principle "My vassal's vassal is not my vassal" held sway.

The economy of the early Middle Ages was centred primarily on agriculture and village labour, and its social character was determined by the process of feudalisation. Political developments of this period were the transition from the early barbarian kingdom to patchwork barbarian kingdoms in which state power was divided among numerous feudal lords who exerted both economic and administrative powers over their vassal serfs.

Popular Resistance to Feudal Bondage

It is important to mention yet another important aspect of this early period of the Middle Ages. In Europe the transition from primitive society based on the commune to feudal society was in effect a transition from a pre-class society to a class society which involved the bondage of the broad masses of the working people, the transformation of former free peasants from village communes with hereditary rights over their plots of land into dependent serfs deprived of their freedom and land, which became the property of their liege-lord. The working people were naturally not all prepared to reconcile themselves meekly to this state of affairs. Class struggle, to be found in any class society, seethed in feudal times as well, sometimes latent, sometimes overt. While feudal relations were taking shape serfs frequently rose up to defend their freedom and attempt to re-establish the equality of the primitive communes. Even when feudal relations had become firmly established, the serfs still continued to protest by carrying out their obligations to their masters badly or refusing to carry out various other obligations and not infrequently resorting to open revolt against the exploiting class.

The Role of the Church

The ruling class was aware that bare-faced violence was not enough to ensure the peasants' obedience. Apart from the temporal sword they turned to spiritual means as well—the Christian Church (the Catholic Church in Western Europe) which had a monopoly over men's beliefs and consciences.

The Church taught that the world had been created by a bounteous god, and that the status quo on earth where some were rich and others poor, some ruled and others obeyed, some administered and others were administered unto, had also been ordained by God and he who protested against God's ordinances was not only a rebel but also a sinner. Thus every working man was to carry out his duties without question, feed and clothe his lord and work for him not only out of fear, but as a matter of conscience. The bulk of the working people in the Middle Ages consisted of peasants who were inclined to be superstitious and accept the religious ideas taught by the Church, which exerted a powerful influence over them and thus became a significant weapon in the hands of the ruling class in its efforts to preserve and consolidate the feudal system of exploitation.

The seigniors greatly appreciated the useful role of the Catholic Church and were generous in their donations to it. As a result,

the Church even in the early Middle Ages came to own vast lands and its high-ranking officers numbered among the most influential members of the ruling class. Abbots of the larger monasteries and bishops regarded themselves as being on a par with leading nobles such as dukes and counts.

The bishops of Rome, who came to be known as the Popes, were obliged to carry out administrative functions as well as their religious ones, and to protect the local population from the barbarians. They thus came to wield considerable authority and soon put forward claims to spiritual leadership of the whole of the Christian world.

Chapter Two

THE EMERGENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF FEUDAL RELATIONS IN EASTERN, SOUTH-EASTERN AND SOUTHERN ASIA

China

In the third century A.D. the disintegration of the slave-holding order brought about the collapse of the Han Empire and the political decline of the central regions of that empire, inhabited by the Hans. On the territory of the Han Empire (the basin of the Yellow River) the Wei state was eventually set up, while in the basin of the Yangtze part of which had been incorporated into the Han Empire, there emerged the Wu and Shu kingdoms. Thus there were two important centres in mediaeval China. In the South, where a great deal of territory remained uncultivated, development was slow. In the North, where it had been imperative to maintain large irrigation networks and provide fortifications against nomad invasions, a centralised state emerged and developed more rapidly.

In the North, in the Tsin state, a transition to new feudal forms of exploitation was underway as early as the third century A.D. Some of the commune peasants and slaves became dependent peasants, the armed retainers of the powerful slave-owners also being allocated land by their masters (on more favourable terms than the former slaves). Meanwhile, within the framework of the traditional allotment system (which had been in existence since 280 A.D.),* another section of the peasantry became feudally dependent tenants of state plots (such tenure involved the payment of taxes, working state land, and labour and military service), and administrative officials in the framework of the new feudal bureaucracy were assured larger plots

* In China and a number of other Far Eastern countries, the state, the supreme landowner, allotted its property to peasants demanding in return the payment of taxes, military service, participation in state construction work, etc.

of land while in office. The estates abandoned during the wars of the latter second and early third centuries provided a land pool from which plots were allocated to the landless peasants. However, before these new feudal relations had been consolidated in the Yellow River valley, it was invaded by nomadic tribes (the Huns, Toba, etc.) and the Tsin state was destroyed. The Han states remained intact only in the Yangtze basin where feudal relations had taken shape more slowly.

The mass devastation of the North wrought by the nomads which was followed by their mingling with the Hans and eventual assimilation, paved the way for the subsequent emergence of feudal relations despite continued state ownership of the land. The need to ensure the proper upkeep of large canal systems and collective defence from the nomads, demanded the creation of a large centralised state. Its main supports were the small and moderately prosperous landowning warriors whose estates were dependent on conditions of service and who played an important part in the ousting of the powerful secular and Buddhist landowners. In the Han-Toba state of the Northern Wei (fifth and first half of the sixth century) a new, more streamlined allotment system was introduced: compulsory labour on state land was replaced by a tax which the peasants had to pay for their holdings—part of which went to the state, and part being divided among the administrative officials of the given region. Private property continued to exist side by side with state lands and these private estates were worked by dependent peasants. The main form of exploitation on the private estates was a crippling rent; the peasants were required to give up approximately half their harvest and payment became obligatory and unavoidable.

The introduction of new, more progressive forms of labour exploitation contributed to the consolidation of the North. The Southern state where the emergence of feudal state property was taking place more slowly and where the landowning aristocracy was still extremely powerful was subjugated by the Northern state in the year 589.

During the reign of the Sui dynasty over a reunited China the allotment system spread to the South as well. Methods of exploitation throughout the whole of China were made uniform likewise, the official religion—Confucianism—with its teaching of submission to the state, held unchallenged sway.

Under the Sui dynasty the unification of the Han lands gave way to a period of wars of conquest; large-scale construction projects were begun and the Great Canal was built—a giant waterway linking the Yellow River and the Yangtze. Labour services on the state lands were so drastically increased that mass uprisings broke out. The emperors of the Tang dynasty (618-907), which

succeeded the Sui dynasty, continued to perfect the feudal-bureaucratic system of exploitation. *Corvée* was reduced, the collection of rents and taxes was reorganised, the lands were allocated to merchants, craftsmen and state slaves. All these factors helped to put an end to the wave of peasant uprisings and facilitated certain economic and cultural advances and an expansion of trade and crafts. To a large extent these advances were achieved at the cost of all-out exploitation of the non-Han population. In order to carry out these new policies an intricately ramified administrative apparatus was set up which was accountable to a vigilant host of inspectors supported by an army consisting of infantry recruited among the Han peasantry and cavalry of conquered nations.

The Tang dynasty waged wars in southern Mongolia and southern Manchuria and in the valleys of the Tarim and Upper Yangtze rivers. These wars undermined China's economic system, which was already undergoing radical alteration with the growth of hereditary landownership in the eighth century, when more and more tax-paying peasants were taken into the service of individual lords as serfs. Wars bled the country white and weakened the central apparatus, and the political position of the landowning bureaucracy was undermined once and for all after a number of defeats by the nomad invaders. The subject peoples of the south (such as the Vietnamese) regained their independence; local chieftains who had since become powerful landowners declared themselves independent. In these conditions private landownership spread rapidly and state revenues decreased accordingly. The impossibility of re-establishing the allotment system eventually led to partial recognition of the feudal chieftains' ownership of their estates and their power over their serfs (they were already collecting taxes from the peasants living on their estates), and also of the right to own landed estates of any size. In China, just as in other feudal states, the development of the new economic system led to an increase in the number of small and medium-sized estates, the owners of which went in for direct exploitation of peasant labour on the spot. However, the need to ensure the upkeep of irrigation and adequate defence measures against nomad invaders (which was particularly vital in China) meant that the feudal bureaucracy did not disappear here, as in other states of the Far East, during the early feudal era.

Under the Tang dynasty in the ninth century, the emergent class of landowners exploited the peasants side by side with the feudal bureaucracy which led to a number of uprisings among the peasants and conquered peoples. In the year 881, the Huang Chao insurgents captured the capital Ch'ang-an. Although the uprising was suppressed, the system of dual exploitation was

thereafter abolished and power was gradually concentrated in the hands of the powerful lords, who had no need to rely on a strong state apparatus.

The seventh, eighth and ninth centuries saw a great flowering of Chinese culture. Gunpowder was invented, techniques for producing paper and china were perfected and wood-block printing began. The number of schools increased, academies were founded and many towns became important cultural centres. Chinese scholars made a number of major discoveries in the fields of mathematics, astronomy, physics, and geography and history also developed apace. The reign of the Tang dynasty also stands out as an era of great poetry—it was the time of Li Po, Tu Fu and Po Chü-i. Tang *Ch'uan-ch'i* or Tales of Marvels were also to make literary history, representing the first serious attempts to write fiction. A materialistic approach to the real world was to be found in the works of a large number of these writers. New schools of painting and sculpture also appeared and many talented artists achieved fame.

The first half of the tenth century was taken up by wars waged between powerful landowners and warlords of Chinese, Turkic, Tai and other extraction. On the ruins of the former empire there arose a number of states, the most powerful of which was that set up by the Khitan tribe. The Khitan invasion of the Yellow River valley brought about a certain amount of cooperation between the powerful Chinese landowners with the support of the towns and the priesthood. Yet the main driving force behind this new movement towards centralisation were the small and moderately-prosperous landed warriors; they proclaimed Chao K'uang Yin emperor, and he founded the Sung dynasty (960-1279).

A new stage in the movement towards centralisation began on a basis of a more developed economy. The Sung dynasty ruled over a smaller territory than the Tang, yet on the other hand, all its lands along the Yellow River, Yangtze and Hsi Chiang valleys were inhabited by an ethnically (Chinese) and socially homogeneous population. The advance of the Sung state was hindered by invasions from the Khitan, Tangut, Tai, and other peoples.

The struggle between the powerful landowners and the central power supported by the small and medium landowners became intensified. In the course of this struggle the old forms of social organisation died away and were replaced by new ones. The most important new feature of this period was the appearance of private landed estates, worked by tenant farmers, who were obliged to pay crippling rents, or serfs. Peasants meanwhile were still obliged to pay taxes to the state. Towns grew up at junctions of important trade routes and a complex fiscal and credit system

took shape. The urban craftsmen together with the traders in the relevant branch of industry united in guilds, which not only settled questions relating to the production of particular goods but also those of an administrative nature (the election of leaders, the granting of help to members in need, the settlement of strife between members, liaison with the town authorities, etc.). In the towns power was in the hands of the imperial officials; there was no independent town administration and its emergence was obstructed by the state monopolies of the production and sale of the most important commodities.

The lack of free lands combined with the attempts to intensify exploitation of rural labour in the tenth and eleventh centuries brought about an increase in taxes, which in its turn caused peasant uprisings, predominantly among the non-Han peasants, who were subjected to the fiercest exploitation. An attempt was made to re-introduce state property (partly at the cost of the landowners and traders) but it proved totally unsuccessful. The situation was extremely critical, and when a great nomad invasion followed soon afterwards, the empire began to fall apart. In 1127, a Han-Jurchen state by the name of Chin was set up in the north, while the southern Han provinces remained in the hands of the Sung dynasty. Both states were economically and politically weak: in the north wars undermined the economy and in the south, after the defeat at the hands of the Jurchen, the powerful lords became more independent than ever, which served to weaken the economic power of the Southern Sung Empire and bring about a temporary decline in trade and urban expansion, not to mention the state's military power.

Korea

Feudal relations in Korea arose in early class states—the Koguryo, Paekche and Silla kingdoms. Power in these states was in the hands of the landed nobility, descended from the clan leaders, while peasants living in communes were the main producers. The latter were either directly dependent on the state or on state officials, members of the emergent class of landowning warriors. Slaves did not play any prominent role in Korean society of the third, fourth and fifth centuries and their number gradually decreased. The main religion of the early feudal Korean society was Confucianism, later to be replaced by Buddhism. In the third and fourth centuries towns were growing up in Korea, and trade and communications were developing.

The fact that the Korean states formed a single ethnic, cultural and geographical unit called forth a natural desire for political unification, which was strengthened by the military threat of the

Chinese Empire (there were Chinese invasions in 598, 611, 613, 614, 645 and in 660). After the wars for unification, the whole of Korea was united under the leadership of the southern state of Silla (late seventh and early eighth centuries).

The united Silla state possessed all the features of a Far Eastern early feudal society: the state structure was based on the state ownership of all the land, and the distribution of this land to the peasants in the form of individual holdings or allotments led to the exploitation of the latter both by the state, in the form of rent and taxes, and also by members of the bureaucracy, who in return for their services were accorded the right to collect rent and taxes from a number of villages. This period was also marked by the gradual disappearance of the commune. Large allotments were worked by peasants bound to overlords. The existence of an allotment system and a pool of free land facilitated the rapid creation of a centralised state apparatus, in as far as the officials of that apparatus were given plots of land instead of salaries, and usually together with the land, the peasants that worked it. The unification of the country provided new stimulus for the development of internal trade and crafts. Foreign trade in Korea was at a low level of development, since it suffered from Chinese competition.

The unwieldy mechanism of allotment systems usually began to obstruct economic development if reforms were not introduced. In the ninth century an upheaval began in the allotment system when a section of the landowning military caste gained possession of large domains. The Buddhist monasteries by this time also owned large landed estates. Intensified exploitation of the peasants by the new feudal lords began, the number of tax-payers decreased, and as a result the state apparatus run by the landowner-administrators was greatly weakened. The state alone was unable to keep down the peasant uprisings (889, 896, etc.), and the struggle against such insurrections was waged on the spot by the powerful landowners and their retainers. Centralised power soon disappeared and two separate states emerged.

The long campaign to suppress the peasant revolts and a wave of invasions from China and what is today Manchuria made it imperative to re-establish a strong centralised state. When Wang Kon began to work towards re-unifying the country in 918, many of the feudal lords voluntarily came to his support. In the new united state, Koryo, the allotment system was reorganised: all the peasants were to pay the state tax-rent (those working state land paid all taxes to the state direct, while the peasants working on estates belonging to members of the bureaucracy paid part to the state and the rest to their employers). It proved possible to consolidate the allotment system largely as a result of the cultivation

of the free lands in the north-west, where many peasants settled and a system of fortifications was set up along the border.

Those engaged in state service were remunerated by land grants, while all feudal lords, even those who were in practice the owners of their land, paid the state a set tax deducted from the revenues from their estates. Since there was a great deal of waste land in Korea, this together with arable land was included in the allotments. For this reason serfs were particularly valuable (unlike those in Vietnam and Japan where there was a shortage of land): more and more of them were bound to these tracts of hitherto uncultivated land by non-economic means, and hostilities between the landowners were mainly over these serfs, who were resettled or taken captive, since without them it was impossible for the landowners to expand their land under cultivation.

By the end of the tenth century, the system of feudal relations had been brought into line with the now uniform methods of exploitation, a streamlined state apparatus had been set up and clear demarcations had been drawn between the rights and duties of civilian administrators and military commanders. A regular army of mobilised peasants had been set up to replace the former retainers. This enabled the feudal lords of Koryo to ward off a Khitan invasion (at the beginning of the eleventh century) and quell peasant uprisings. As was the case with Vietnam, the lessening of the pressure exerted by Chinese feudal lords, now that the power of the Chinese Empire was on the wane, was yet another factor which contributed to the flowering of the centralised feudal state in Korea during the eleventh and early twelfth centuries.

During this period it was possible to distinguish between two clearly-defined groups of peasants, those that were free and those that were bound to the service of either individual landowners or the state. While the main forms of exploitation to which the first category was subjected were tax-rents, labour and military service, the second were bond-tenants, generally employed in the service of powerful landowners or the monarch himself. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries there was a considerable amount of urban expansion and industrial development, but these processes advanced relatively slowly, obstructed as they were by state control, export bans and the absence of organised guilds, quite apart from the fact that the products for export made in Korea were very like those in which China traded, and the competition was very keen. The only town of any size was the capital. Meanwhile cultural links with China at this period and Chinese science, art and literature exerted an important influence on Korean culture.

Japan

The emergence of a class society in Japan coincided with the transition to feudal patterns in the majority of Asiatic states. The nascent Japanese class society (like its Indonesian and other counterparts) followed, from the very outset, the path of feudal development: the latent elements of a slave-owning society never took firm root. The early class society of the Yamato "state" in the fifth and sixth centuries was inhabited predominantly by free peasants living in communes and the lower categories of hereditary dependent peasants and slaves. During that period a hereditary aristocracy gradually emerged from the ranks of the clan leadership and by the end of the sixth century the main principles of regal power (the Sumeragi dynasty) had crystallised.

Meanwhile towns were growing up and industry was expanding; a hierarchy of administrative officials and a special caste of priests of Shinto, the traditional Japanese religion, were taking shape. The formation of a class society was accompanied by intense struggle. In 592 power fell into the hands of the Soga clan, but for the peasants who had formed the main body of insurgents against the Sumeragi nothing changed. During the rule of the Soga the exploiting ruling class which required a religion better adapted to a class society than Shinto proceeded to encourage the propagation of Buddhism in Japan (from the sixth century onwards). The internal structure of the early class society in Japan did not change under the rule of the Soga. Meanwhile the intensification of internal social contradictions and clashes with China and the Korean state of Silla necessitated a re-organisation of the administrative apparatus.

The basic principles of a new feudal society were drawn up in the laws of Shotoku Taishi, which represented a local adaptation of a Chinese code of laws. Parallel with this consolidation of centralised state power, the Buddhist monasteries were acquiring large landed estates which were being organised on feudal patterns. These new developments were resisted by the hereditary aristocracy led by the Soga, who were overthrown to be replaced by the Sumeragi as rulers of a new state run on strictly feudal lines (the Reforms of Taikwa, 645).

Making the most of the now consolidated centralised state machine the feudal lords started a campaign against the free peasants working in communes and the vestiges of the clan aristocracy. The results of this campaign found expression in the Code of Taiho (701): the sovereign was the supreme owner of all the land; free peasants were allowed temporary rights to plots of arable land, granted them by the monarch on condition that they paid taxes and fulfilled their obligations. Peasants were forbidden

to abandon their plots. In this way the free and bond peasants became state serfs and constituted the lowest social class apart from the state slaves. The state officials and titled nobility received much larger tracts of land, part of which were hereditary in as far as state office was often hereditary. They were allowed to keep part of the tax-rents paid by the state peasants by way of remuneration for their services. The forms of social and economic organisation which emerged in Japan in the eighth century were largely modelled on those of her more advanced neighbours, especially China (the allotment system, etc.).

The combination of the institution of state serfs and the distribution of allotment holdings to feudal lords (without peasants) was fraught with contradiction, since the owners of the allotments required peasants to work their land and the only way to obtain their services (after the eighth century slave labour was no longer used) was by ruining the state peasants. This then brought about a decrease in the number of tax-payers. However, these contradictions had not yet come to the surface in the eighth century. The Taikwa reforms ushered in a new period in Japanese history, the so-called Nara period (710-784) named after the capital, Nara.

The Nara period was a time of comparative economic and political stability. The production relations which had shortly before been legally defined had not yet come to clash with the productive forces. The amount of land under cultivation increased, the irrigation network was expanded and rice production rose. Mining and urban development also flourished. The laws were codified, a chronicle of historical events was drawn up, in which real events were to be found side by side with myths (for example the myth of the divine descent of the emperors from the sun-Goddess Amaterasu Omikami). Important works of literature were also produced, such as the *Manyoshu* anthology in the second half of the eighth century.

Nara Japan was ruled over by the Sumeragi dynasty, which was obliged to contend not only with the vestiges of the old hereditary aristocracy but also with the leading members of the feudal bureaucracy. By the end of the eighth century the old aristocracy had been defeated and the feudal bureaucrats had come to power. This change in the social foundation of feudal society led to a change in its structure and the character of the struggle waged between the feudal lords. This struggle was now led by a group of noble courtiers holding administrative office against powerful landowners in charge of administration in the provinces. These two groups were not of the same line of descent as the clan aristocracy and they continued their struggle against imperial power, aiming to turn the estates which went with their office into

hereditary property, and in so doing they succeeded in seriously undermining imperial power. Real power was now no longer in the hands of the Sumeragi but in the hands of a family of landowners, the Fujiwara. This change marked the beginning of the so-called Heian period (ninth, tenth and early eleventh centuries).

During this period the main form of land tenure was the large private estate or *shoen*, which was not subject to taxation. These estates first appeared as a result of the working of former uncultivated lands, which once cultivated were exempted from taxes. This led to a sharp decrease in state revenue since more and more peasants were being enlisted to work the estates. The emergence of these new landowners also undermined the political foundation of the centralised state. Other factors which favoured this process of decentralisation were the absence of any major foreign enemies at that time, and hence of the need to build up a large army, and the lack of wide-scale irrigation.

In the course of the struggle against the powerful landowners the administration intensified the tax-burden, which led to an exodus of state peasants to the *shoen* estates and mass uprisings in the ninth, tenth and eleventh centuries. The impossibility of organising the labour of the state peasants effectively from the centre obliged the state to distribute much of its lands as small hereditary estates to knights or Samurai, in the service of the state or the powerful lords. This section of the landowning classes grew rapidly and gradually ousted the local administrative officials in the provinces. The eleventh and twelfth centuries, particularly in the north and east of the country, saw the rise of the Samurai, who soon came to contend with the owners of the *shoen* for influence on the central power.

The owners of the *shoen* in the south and the central part of the country were unable to retain their control over the emperors: the balance of power between the large landowners and the Samurai enabled the emperors, with the support of the monasteries, to conduct independent policies (1069-1167). Yet this consolidation of the central power was on a rather limited scale. During this period small landed estates were to appear on the scene (earlier than in other countries of Asia): they evolved mainly as a result of the disintegration of the communes, a process which took place particularly rapidly in Japan, since no important communal amenities such as advanced irrigation systems existed. This disintegration was accelerated by the weakness of the central power, the need for which was less acute on the Japanese islands than in other states with well-developed irrigation systems, constantly exposed to attacks from foreign invaders. The decline of the economic system based on state ownership of the land, agricultural production run by feudal lords and adminis-



The Yakushiji Pagoda at Nara

trators, and commune farming took place earlier in Japan than in Korea, China, Vietnam and other countries of the Far East.

The replacement of one type of feudal relations by another could not possibly take place without bloodshed, since each type represented the interests of a specific group of landowners, none of whom was willing to relinquish former rights and privileges. In the mid-twelfth century there were three groups of landowners in Japan: the Samurai and their liege-lords in the north (the Minamoto family), the owners of the large estates in the south, where the Samurai were much weaker (the Taira family) and the landowning officers of state from the capital who formed the emperor's retinue (the Fujiwara family). The North with its more advanced social development and predominance of small landed estates was to emerge victorious. The Taira were defeated in 1185 and the emperor's following in 1192: this second defeat incidentally was contributed to by the peasant uprisings in the enormous estates of the Heian aristocracy. Minamoto Yoritomo declared himself the new ruler of Japan—the *shogun*—and the title was proclaimed hereditary.

The wide-scale redistribution of land carried out after the victory of the Samurai replaced the old forms of landownership with new ones. Samurai estates sprang up throughout the country. The considerably reduced number and scale of the landed possessions in the hands of the emperor, the landowning officers of state from the capital and the Buddhist monasteries now constituted a minority share. The peasants from now on paid taxes to the state and rent to the Samurai and other landowners.

In twelfth-century Japan, towns, trade and industry reached a high level of development. Guilds were to be found throughout the country; the predomination of small and medium-sized Samurai estates led to the emergence of a number of economic centres each with a number of large towns. This set Japan apart from the typical feudal states of Asia which had an enormous capital, and otherwise only small provincial centres. As a result of the growth of internal and, to a lesser extent, foreign trade, large groups of traders and carriers grew up. Twelfth-century Japan was a feudal state with high standards of economic and cultural development. Many aspects of its social and cultural life were strongly influenced by China.

India

After the collapse of the slave-holding society of the Gupta Empire and the slave-holding states in the south of India feudal elements, which had started to emerge in the fifth century, gradually came to dominate in Indian society. Former peasant commune

farmers set up as small landowners on their own, adopting feudal methods of exploitation just as the large clans and the temples. The impoverished peasants from the former communes, slaves working the land, and the population of conquered lands came to constitute the dependent agricultural labour force.

The process of feudalisation in northern and southern India took place simultaneously but followed different patterns. Yet Indian feudalism as a whole exhibited various distinctive characteristics, in particular the slow consolidation of state ownership of land and the conditional landownership of the nobles in their rulers' service. Privately owned estates predominated, while the feudal hierarchy was bound up with the hierarchy of hereditary landowners, and the feudally exploited commune preserved a considerable degree of internal independence (both economic and administrative). The caste system played an important part in the evolution of the various estates of feudal society and the main forms of exploitation were the leasing of land and the collection of quit-rent.

Early feudalism in India went hand in hand with political decentralisation. However, the decline of urban and cultural development did not make itself felt particularly at this period. This was largely due to effective urban administration and the fact that the source of prosperity of many towns was external trade, which at that period was well-advanced. The presence of artisans in the village communes meant that the exchange of goods between town and country played a less important part in India than in other Asian countries (China, Japan, etc.).

The first empire of the early feudal period was the north Indian Vardhan state. Its rulers depended for their power on the support of a hierarchy of feudal princes; state ownership of land was not widespread and the stratum of landed administrative officials had not yet come to dominate the society of that period. The army was made up partly of armed retainers of the feudal lords and partly of mercenaries. The harsh laws introduced at that time were designed to promote new forms of exploitation and the bondage of more and more of the peasantry.

In the middle of the seventh century in place of the Vardhan Empire there emerged a number of princedoms, ruled over by an aristocracy of warlords of an immigrant people, the Rajputs. During this period the landed military caste bound more and more peasants from the former communes to their service and each individual landowner consolidated his power with the support of his armed retainers. Meanwhile the central power remained weak.

Comparable processes, which however did not involve the assimilation of new ethnic groups, took place in southern India

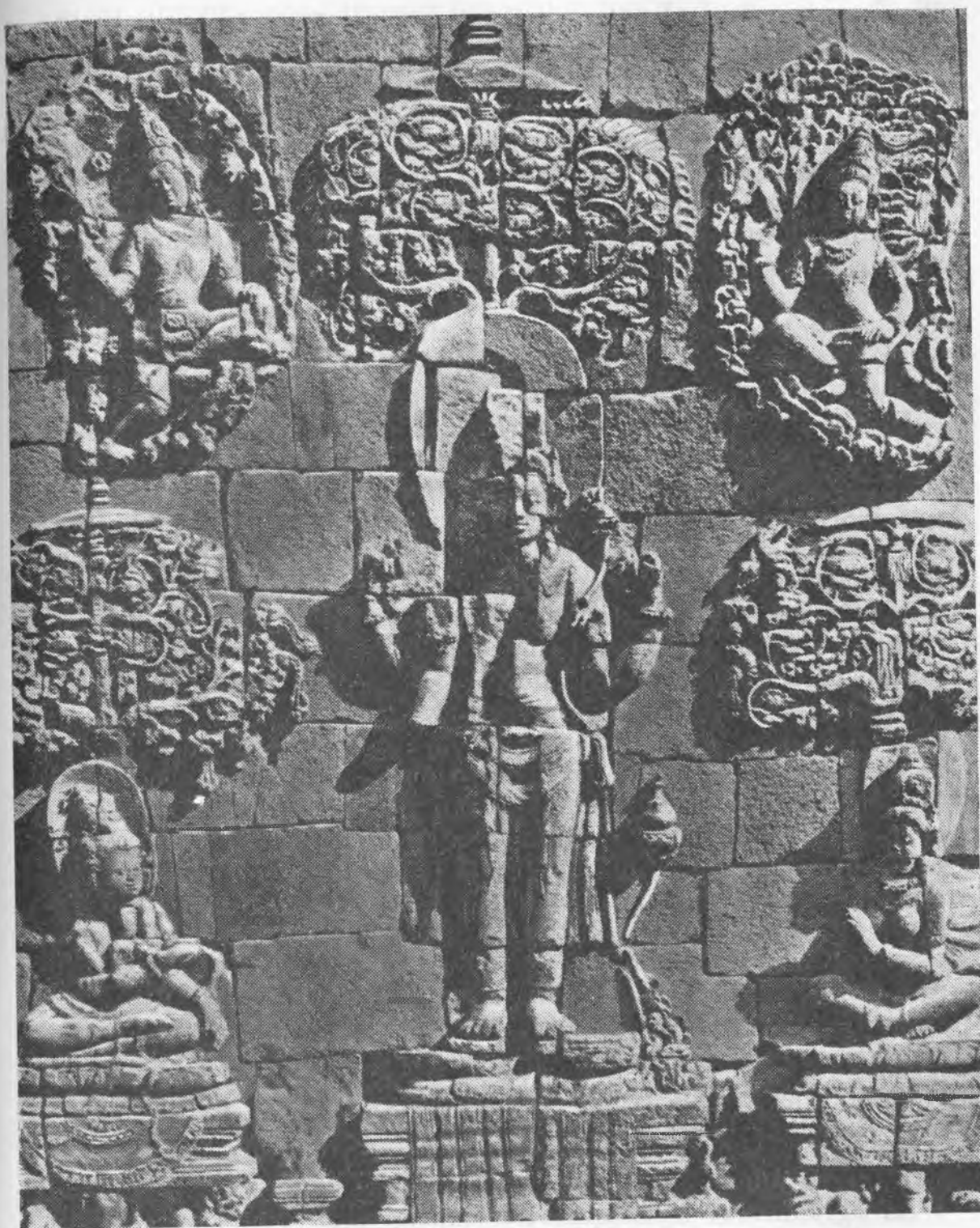
(Deccan). Here large states were to emerge (such as those of the Pallavas and the Chaulukyas) in which an important role was to be played by the large coastal towns. In the middle of the first millennium A. D. the bulk of the peasants from the former communes were either bound to the powerful landowners and made to pay crippling rents or deprived of almost all the rights they had formally enjoyed in the communes and exploited by the commune elders who gradually came to resemble feudal landowners.

The eleventh and twelfth centuries saw a tendency towards unification of the northern and central Deccan ruled over by the Chaulukya dynasty and the princedoms of southern India ruled over by the Chola dynasty. At the same time state ownership of land became widespread throughout a large part of the south, many representatives of the feudal class becoming non-hereditary landowners. A marked consolidation of the state apparatus took place.

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries there was growing uniformity in the economic and cultural patterns and foreign policies of the various Indian states, largely as a result of trade. In the towns an important role was played by the guild-like organisations of traders and craftsmen, which ultimately, however, remained under the control of the feudal lords.

Universal bondage of the commune peasants and the consolidation of the feudal states led to resistance on the part of the exploited. This was to find expression in the foundation of a number of religious sects, which propagated the idea of religious and, to varying degrees, economic equality (Bhakti, Lingayats) and attacked caste privileges. By this time the traditional caste system defined with relation to men's professions and economic roles had led to the setting up of a complex and conservative state structure. In order to counter this new opposition the traditional Brahmin religion was reformed under the pressure of changing social patterns and Hinduism evolved in its place. Its distinctive characteristics were the complete absence of a church hierarchy and a church apparatus: each member of the highest caste—each Brahmin—by right of birth became a spiritual mentor of the faithful and the failure to obey the Brahmins, according to Hindu beliefs, evoked the wrath of the gods. Together with the military caste of the Kshatriya the Brahmins exploited the members of the lower castes, the Vaisya and the Sudra, to which all the peasants, artisans, traders belonged as well as groups outside the caste system who found themselves at the very bottom of the social ladder.

The early feudal era in India was marked by outstanding cultural achievements: impressive architectural monuments like the



Candi Mendut temple. Central Java. Section of the outer wall

Tanjore temple and the rock temple at Ellora were built. In the sphere of religious sculpture, which played such an important didactic role, the realistic art of the first-fifth centuries was replaced by stylised portrayals of various divinities striking for their size and unusual poses. The literature of the period was very rich in panegyric poetry dedicated to various princes and was almost completely lacking in historical writing. Philosophical literature flourished but here as in literature as a whole imitations of early classical models were the order of the day.

South-East Asia

Unlike the peoples of India and China who made the transition to feudalism from a relatively developed slave-holding society, the peoples of South-East Asia, just like the Arabs, did not evolve developed slave-holding civilisations. The social structure of the states which emerged in this part of the world after the third century B.C. was in many ways ill-defined, yet there is no doubt that there existed some kind of slavery, a monarchy and clan aristocracy, while well-knit communes were preserved. Both in the early and later Middle Ages, the peoples of South-East Asia constituted a unified group of states with economic, political and cultural features all their own, each of which was to develop in a manner determined by local conditions. In the second and third centuries A.D. the states of South-East Asia were centred in the deltas of the main rivers and around the most important points on the trade route from India to the Far East and the Spice Islands. Each of these states was centred round a large town lying on a trade route and in the delta of a large river, where agriculture flourished. The emergent class societies of the forerunners of the Mon, Burmese, Khmers, Vietnamese and Indonesians adopted with increasing rapidity the forms of class organisation and religion to be found in India at that period (one of the most important of these religions being Buddhism), particularly those of southern India, with which these states traded. Some forms of Chinese class organisations were also adopted, but on a smaller scale.

As agricultural techniques developed and trade with India expanded, many of the small states in this part of the world started to amalgamate to form early feudal empires and states. The economy of these states was determined to an important degree by the fact that they were situated along major trade routes. Among the largest were the Southern Khmer Empire of Funan (second-sixth centuries), the Srivijaya Empire in western Indonesia (seventh-fourteenth centuries) and the state of Champa

in Central Vietnam (second-fifteenth centuries). As agriculture advanced and sea-trade gradually became the domain of the Arabs, powerful landowners came to play an increasingly important role in the states of South-East Asia. In the early Middle Ages state ownership of the land predominated in the states of Indochina and elements of it were to be found in Indonesia. The military and administrative nobility which grew up as a result in the ninth, tenth and eleventh centuries, embarked on a struggle for power with the old hereditary aristocracy (in Vietnam with the Chinese aristocracy). In the ninth century in Cambodia, in the tenth century in Vietnam, the eleventh in Indonesia and Burma and the thirteenth in Siam advanced feudal states were set up, in which the economy was based on a system of land rent and compulsory labour services by the commune peasants. Trading empires gradually weakened and disintegrated while the peoples and states to be found today started to take shape. Within each of these states there was a struggle for power between the small and medium landowners (who supported state ownership of land) and the powerful feudal lords who favoured the division of their countries into a number of large provinces under their control. At the same time both these groups opposed the interests of the commune peasants who were gradually being bound to the land. In the northern part of South-East Asia state ownership of land was always more firmly established than in the south, but despite this in the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries more and more of the peasants came to be bound to the land throughout the area, and a complex administrative machine was also taking shape, while religions were reformed and adapted to the demands of the new era (new versions of Buddhism and Islam were propagated, replacing Hinduism and various other faiths).

The political history of these centuries consists of a series of wars for the unification of various princedoms around the main centres of state power, and uprisings of the commune peasants seeking to regain their former freedoms.

The period between the seventh and twelfth centuries was a time of cultural advance when such architectural masterpieces as the stupa of Borobudur in Indonesia, the temples at Angkor Wat in Cambodia and Pagan in Burma were built.

Chapter Three

KIEV RUS

The Ancient East Slav Tribes

The East Slavs were the original settlers of the lands they inhabit today. From time immemorial they inhabited the Dnieper, Dniester and Vistula valleys and the foothills of the Carpathians, as traces of their Neolithic and Bronze Age ancestors show. In the west their lands extended as far as the upper reaches of the Danube, the Oder and the Elbe. Slavonic tribes were to be found on the territory of the southern part of the present-day Soviet Union as far back as the time of the Scythians. The first written historical references to the Slavonic peoples appeared soon after the beginning of our era and were to appear more and more frequently. The names of many early Slavonic tribes and the sites of their settlements are known to us. The *polyanye* lived on the east bank of the Dnieper and their main town was Kiev. The *severyanye* lived in the valley of the Desna on the west bank of the Dnieper as far as the Northern Donets. The woodland between the Pripet and the Ros was inhabited by the *drevlyanye*, whose tribal centre was Iskorosten. Further north, on the Pripet, lived the *dregovich*i, and between the Dnieper and the Sozh there lived the *radimichi*. The shores of Lake Ilmen were inhabited by Ilmen Slavs or Slovenes. The tribes which settled furthest east were the *vyatichi*, who lived in the valleys of the rivers Oka and Moskva. Transcarpathia in the west was inhabited by the White Croats and the Southern Bug valley by the *volynians*. Apart from the above-mentioned tribes there existed other Slavonic peoples as well. The East Slav tribes were the ancient forbears of the Russian, Ukrainian and Byelorussian peoples.

The main occupation of all these tribes was agriculture. This part of the world was difficult to cultivate in that most of it

consisted of forest which had to be cleared. After cutting down trees and undergrowth a whole summer was required for the logs to dry and then the dry timber was burnt. Heavy branches were used to harrow the land, ashes were dug into the top layer and the seed was sown.

When the earth had been exhausted after a number of harvests a new patch was sown, the old one being abandoned for many years at a stretch. The Slavs sowed rye, wheat, barley and millet, and kept cows, horses and sheep. Iron tools appeared at an early stage, and iron axes and ploughshares were used. The fact that the Slavs began to develop arable farming at an early stage marked an important step forward. Development was slow until the art of working iron had been mastered, an achievement which ushered in a virtual revolution in production. Iron ploughshares for wooden ploughs and later more advanced ploughs appeared, while iron axes were used to cut down trees for the clearing of new agricultural land.

Other occupations of the Slavonic tribes were fishing and hunting. In the woods along the banks of the Dnieper there were great quantities of game and the rivers were teeming with fish. Bees used to store in the trunks of hollow trees their honey and the Slavs of old used to hollow out tree trunks to make additional stores of honey. Thus the honey of wild bees soon came to make up an important part of their diet.

These ancient peoples originally lived in tribal communities organised on a clan basis. As their economic system grew more complex, individual families in the various communes started to occupy a position of prominence. Fortified settlements were set up on river banks. Various crafts developed rapidly and soon there were large numbers of skilled blacksmiths, potters, masons, stone- and wood-carvers. Gradually towns appeared, Kiev and Novgorod being the first important Slav towns. The clan structure of society soon came to impede the development of the economy and it gradually disappeared. It persisted longest of all in the north and remote areas, disappearing first among the *polyanye* in the south.

Rich chieftains or princes were soon to emerge in the Slavonic communities. Each of them rallied to their services groups of armed retainers (*druzhiny*). The princes used to collect tribute from the peasants under their rule, and also added to their wealth by plundering the possessions of their fellow-princes. Long-term alliances between various Slavonic princes, beginning with the sixth century, represented the first kind of state in this part of the world.

The Slavonic peoples were constantly exposed to hostile invasions by the Eastern nomads such as the Huns and the Avars.

They would sweep across their lands like a raging pestilence, leaving a trail of bloodshed behind them, plundering corn and livestock, burning down dwellings and taking men, women and children into captivity.

The Slavs had to be always on their guard against surprise attack. At times they even did their ploughing armed, and they were soon to become extremely skilled in the art of war.

The early Slavs were nature-worshippers: the sun, wind, storms and forest and all other natural phenomena were considered animate. The Sun God was called Dazhdbog, the Wind God Stribog and the Storm God Perun. Festivals were held in honour of the Sun. In the spring, celebrations were held to mark the end of winter and welcome spring, when round pancakes symbolising the Sun were baked. A straw figure symbolising winter was ceremoniously burnt or drowned in a near-by river and this rite was accompanied by dancing and singing.

The Slavs were a strong, stalwart people renowned for their hospitality.

The Emergence of Feudal Relations Among the East Slavs

Gradually numerous changes took place in the economic and social life of the Slavonic peoples. The initial changes were those of an economic variety. In the southern black earth regions oxen were increasingly used for ploughing. More and more land was cultivated and woods cleared to make room for crops. Horses were also used as draught animals. New lands to the north were opened up and agricultural methods advanced: spring and autumn sowing were introduced. Soon the Slavs were producing much more rye, wheat, barley, oats and millet. Peas, turnips and lentils also came to be cultivated on a large scale, and the peasants started to keep more livestock and poultry.

Of course this did not mean that an age of plenty had arrived. Man was still scantily equipped for his struggle with nature, his tools were still primitive and his work slow and onerous. However, techniques were by now relatively well-advanced and produce much more abundant than in the time of the primitive communes. Patterns of social life and production were steadily advancing.

The position of the more wealthy members of the communes and the old tribal aristocracy grew stronger as the economy developed. They tried to work their land as well as possible and to lay their hands on as much land—man's main source of livelihood at that time—as they could. In this way the emergent prosperous stratum of society consolidated its power and extended its landed

possessions. They bound the peasants living on the seized territories to the land. Thus the (free) peasants or *smerds*, who formed the bulk of the rural population in the early Russian princedoms, gradually lost their freedom while the number of estates belonging to noble landowners or boyars grew.

Some slave labour was used but peasants constituted the main labour force in this early Slav society. The slaves or *kholops* were used as an unskilled, subsidiary labour force. Vital agricultural work was carried out by the *smerds*. After the boyars captured lands from the peasant communes they allocated plots to the peasants, so that the latter could support themselves and their families while working for the boyars.

Soon two distinct classes were to emerge—peasants bound to their master's land which they worked for him and feudal lords who owned the land. This development marked the beginning of the mediaeval period in Russian society.

The First Russian State

Various alliances were concluded between the Russian princedoms as early as the sixth century. This process took place gradually in the lands around the River Dnieper. At the end of the ninth century, during the reign of Prince Oleg (879-912) the princedoms of Kiev and Novgorod united. Kiev became the centre of the new Russian state, which consisted of a number of large Slav princedoms peopled by the *polyanye*, *severyanye*, *drevlyanye* and other alliances of Slavonic tribes.

The princes of this early Russian state collected tribute from their subjects themselves. They used to set off to collect this tribute at the beginning of winter together with a large troop of retainers. The prince's subjects would bring out tribute to their ruler when he entered their village: great store was set by furs such as beaver, squirrel and marten. They brought out honey in jugs and wooden buckets, wax and farm produce.

The common people eventually rebelled against this extortion and in the year 945 Prince Igor was slain in revenge for his excessive demands.

On her accession, Igor's widow Olga (ruled from 945 to 969) took cruel vengeance on the insurgents: the story goes that she burnt down their village and then had many of the inhabitants burnt alive. Nevertheless, the story also goes that she was obliged to stipulate more realistic tribute quotas and subsequently abide by the new rules.

Gradually the state of Rus extended its frontiers. Its armed might and military skills came to represent a more formidable

challenge. Svyatoslav (942-972) added many lands to the state of Rus and subjugated the *vyatichi*, the Volga Bulgars and the Khazar kingdom. He also captured Bulgarian territory in the Danube valley.

The Adoption of the Christian Religion

As the state of Rus grew in size and strength it came into closer contact with Byzantium and Europe, where Christianity was already the universally accepted religion, while Rus was still a pagan state. The cult of the pagan nature-gods reflected the Slavs' concepts of the power of nature but could not be used by the princes to enhance their power over their subjects.

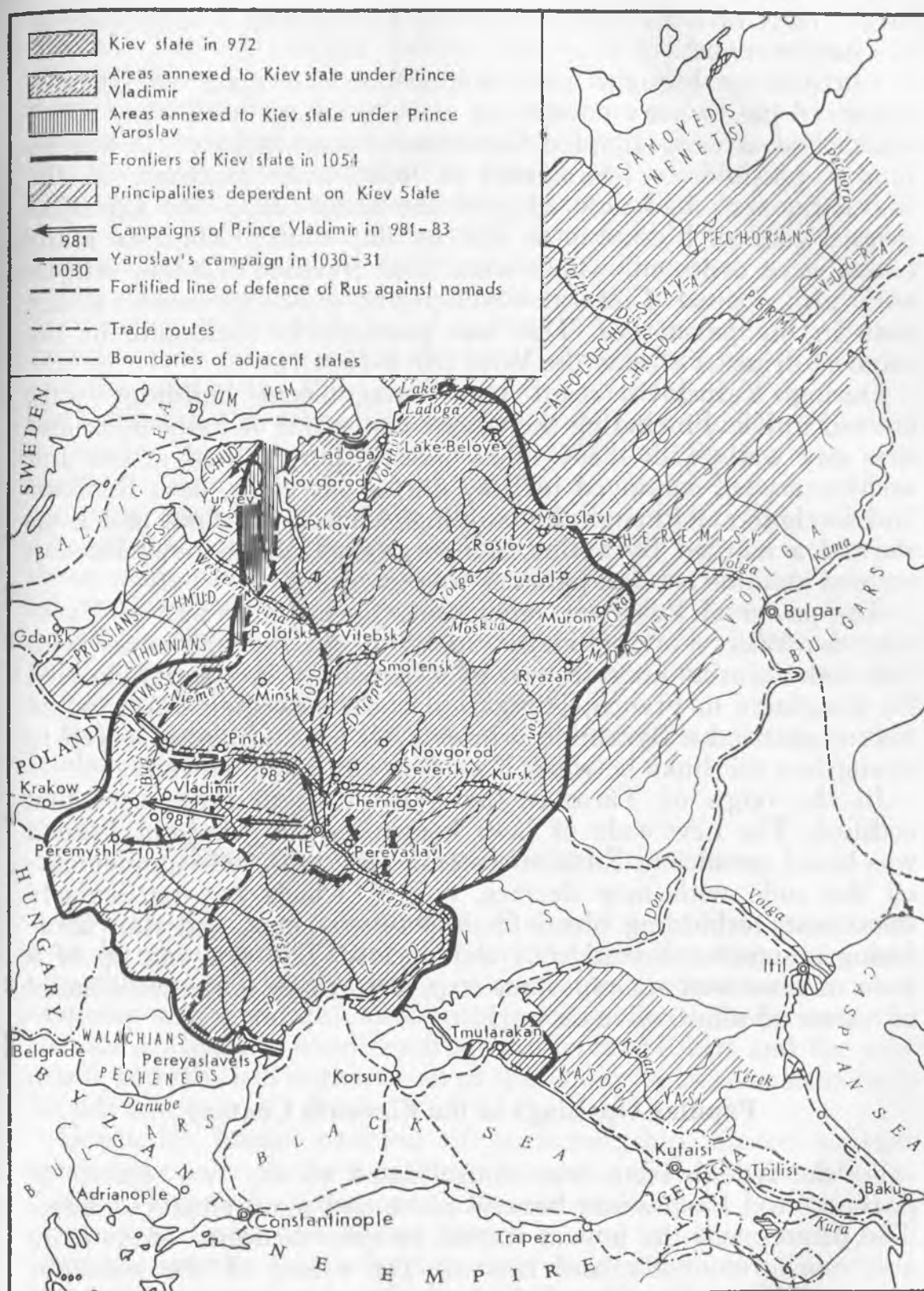
Christianity however held out very different prospects: it had long extolled the emperor as God's representative on earth, and the Christian God was declared to be the one, omnipotent and omniscient ruler of the whole world, a factor which was stressed in support of the principle of single undivided rule in the sphere of temporal administration. As new, more complex social relations emerged the princes required a religion which would promote their unchallenged power.

The Christian faith taught that there was no power apart from that ordained by the Lord and consequently that all good Christians should without question obey their earthly rulers, who after all were God's representatives.

The Christian teaching also furthered the submission of the masses with its doctrine of a life after death. All those who accepted their fate meekly were assured of a life in paradise with God and the angels, while torture in hell awaited the sinners. The ignorant masses followed this teaching and became more submissive. The magnificent churches built at that period, the elaborate services with fine singing, much ritual, and icons lit up with candles—all reflected the growing power of the feudal state, and attracted the common people.

The Kiev Prince Vladimir (who reigned till 1015), son of Svyatoslav, was converted to Christianity and declared it to be the official religion of Rus in the year 988. Portrayals of pagan gods and idols were forbidden and existing ones were destroyed. The men of Kiev were summoned to the banks of the Dnieper where they were baptised at the command of Vladimir.

The nobility in the Kiev state willingly adopted this new religion, which assisted it to assert its power over the working people. However, in many districts the common people resisted the new teaching and on frequent occasions Christianity was introduced by force. There were uprisings against the introduction of the new religion in Novgorod and other towns. The Church received



ANCIENT RUS IN THE 10th — MIDDLE OF THE 11th CENTURY

large tracts of land from the ruling princes and a tenth part of the state revenues.

Christianity brought new strength to the state of Rus. It enhanced the prince's power and made relations with other states which had already adopted Christianity much simpler. It was no longer possible for foreigners to look with contempt on the Slavs, for they had now adopted the same faith. The Christian priests were all literate men and in the church libraries many books were collected, which were then recopied. Church schools were also opened. Cultural development advanced more rapidly than in the pagan era. This was particularly noticeable in the reign of Prince Yaroslav the Wise (1019-1054).

During Yaroslav's reign many magnificent buildings were erected in Kiev, including the unique Cathedral of Saint Sofia and new city walls with the Golden Gates. Many skilled artists and architects were employed in Kiev during his reign, both Russians and foreigners. Although the buildings, church paintings and icons showed a marked Byzantine influence, gradually a new, Russian style of architecture and painting was emerging.

The power of Rus grew remarkably during the reign of Yaroslav the Wise. Foreign kings sought to conclude alliances with him and Yaroslav himself married a Swedish princess and married his daughters to French, Hungarian and Norwegian kings, while his son married a Byzantine princess. All these alliances served to strengthen the links between Kiev Rus and other powers.

In the reign of Yaroslav the Wise Russian laws were first codified. The new code of laws known as the *Russkaya Pravda* was based on ancient Russian custom. Yaroslav's sons supplemented the code with new decrees, one of which was particularly important, forbidding blood feuds between clans, and thus abolishing a significant vestige of clan society. The drawing up of a code of laws was an important step forward in the establishment of a state administrative network.

Popular Uprisings in the Eleventh Century

As the feudal state was consolidated so the two classes of peasants and landowners became more and more clearly defined. The princes and the boyars started to seize peasants' lands more and more frequently and increase the extent of the peasants' labour services. The Church had also become an important landowner and started to oppress the peasants.

The resistance of the oppressed also gathered momentum, particularly in years of natural disasters such as bad harvests and famine. In 1024 there was an exceptionally bad harvest and the

local nobility hoarded large stores of grain in the province of Suzdal. The old pagan priests exploited the wave of popular discontent, and stirred up the people. They rose up against the nobility demanding bread and protesting against the Christian Church, which had become yet another oppressive landowner. At this the Kiev prince marched to Suzdal and crushed the popular uprising, executing and incarcerating many of the insurgents.

In Kiev itself in the year 1068 the working people rose up against their prince, at the time when dangerous new nomad tribes, the Polovtsi, were threatening Kiev from the East. The Kiev army of Prince Izyaslav (1024-1078) was defeated. Prince Izyaslav took refuge within the walls of the city after the defeat, and the land of the Kiev principedom was abandoned to the enemy. This alarmed the urban and country dwellers and they convened a popular assembly or *vyeche* on the Market Square and proclaimed: "The Polovtsi are abroad in our land! Prince, give us weapons and horses so that we can ride out and fight them!" The prince refused because he feared that the people would use those weapons against him and the boyars. This refusal sparked off an insurrection: the people drove Izyaslav from the town, seized his castle and distributed his wealth among themselves, his gold, silver and furs. The *vyeche* elected another ruler and then put up successful resistance to the Polovtsi.

It was against this background of intense class struggle that feudal society gradually took definite shape.

The Formation of Independent Principedoms

Up until the twelfth century Rus was a unified state ruled over by the Grand Prince of Kiev. Admittedly, that unity had never been particularly strong or deep: the predominant form of economy was a natural subsistence variety, the links between the various settlements were far from firmly established and the economic and political organisation of the country was not particularly far advanced.

Gradually feudal patterns of landownership started to take much firmer root in the separate principedoms of Rus—those of Vladimir, Novgorod, Chernigov, Ryazan and many others. The princes, warlords, and boyars started seizing more and more land from the *smerds* and enlarging their landed estates. More farm buildings appeared and agricultural labour became more organised. The labour services of the peasants for their lords were carried out under constant and strict supervision either by the lord himself or his bailiff. Groups of the peasants came to be employed in the boyar's household and the outbuildings.

The three-field system came to be widely adopted: one field would lie fallow, a second would be sown in the spring and a third in the autumn. This led to increased harvests and a slow but steady development of farm implements, which was an important step forward. Towns and crafts also developed considerably.

As these feudal estates became more prosperous and their owners more powerful, the power of the local princes grew, while the power of the Grand Prince of Kiev was weakened. The emergence of independent princedoms was at the outset a progressive historical phenomenon.

Among the large number of independent provinces which had formerly been part of Rus were Great Novgorod and the princedom of Vladimir. The lands of the province of Novgorod were centred round Lake Ilmen and stretched far to the north beyond the Byeloye Ozero (White Lake), Lake Onega, the Northern Dvina and the Northern Urals.

The boyars were powerful landowners who constituted the highest class in Novgorod society. Next to them came the rich merchants and other landowners, prosperous but not as powerful as the boyars. These three groups were referred to as the "finest" men and it was they who held sway over the province of Novgorod. It was they who ruled the destinies of the working people, the peasants, craftsmen, carriers, ferrymen, and the townsfolk. Although there were many more of the latter than there were boyars and merchants, they were known as "lesser" or "black" folk.

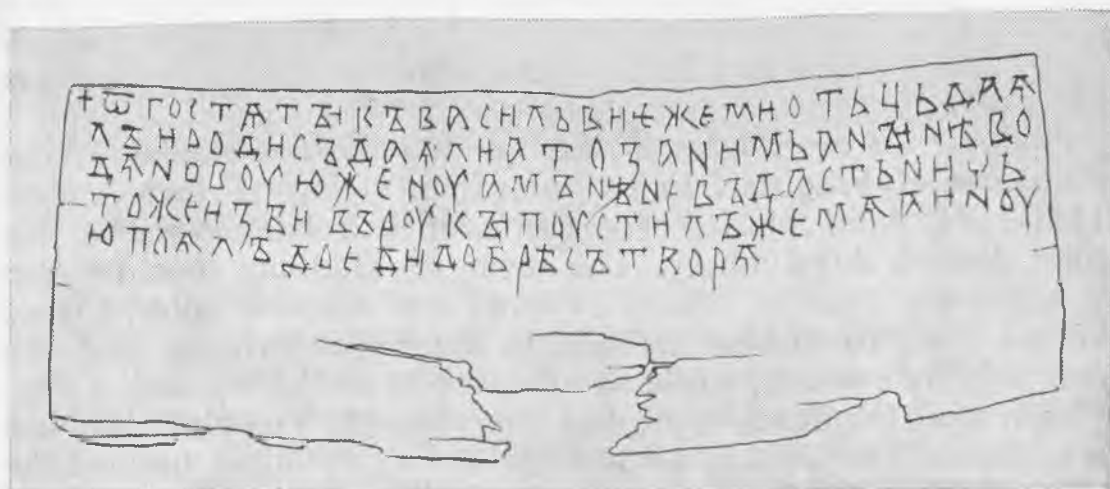
The produce from the land and the work of the town craftsmen were sold at the bustling Novgorod market. Many merchants, or "guests", as they were known in those days, came to Novgorod to buy the city's highly prized wares. Among their number were frequent visitors from foreign lands. Overseas merchants brought with them expensive cloth, wines, copper, tin, dried fruit and sweetmeats. German merchants set up their own trading post which was surrounded by a high palisade. Merchants from the East also came to Novgorod, from such countries as Persia, India and Afghanistan.

Novgorod was a leading cultural centre as well. It was an advanced city for those times, with cobbled streets and piped water. There was a large number of craftsmen in the city and many of its citizens were literate. Archaeological excavations have brought to light a large number of charters written on birch bark.

The *vyeche*, formed of all the free householders of the town, played an important part in the government of Novgorod. The ruler of Novgorod was called the *posadnik*, and was elected exclusively from among the powerful boyars. The *vyeche* also



Chronicle written on birch bark—"Of Vassil's guests"—unearthed in Novgorod in 1951. It dates from the eleventh century



A tracing of the same chronicle

elected a commander of the city guard (a thousand), special troops selected from among the townsfolk. The archbishop played an important role in the city's affairs too. There was also a prince, but this title was not hereditary. The princes of Novgorod were elected and then invited to the city. They were in charge of the troops and the court of justice, although they were obliged to make judgements in accordance with Novgorod customs.

There were frequent uprisings in Novgorod of the "lesser" men against the "finest" (the richer, powerful citizens). Sometimes two separate *vyeches* were convened, one in the Market Side and the other in Sofia Side, and the bells would ring out loudly at both ends of town. The two groups would then meet on the bridge over the river Volkhov and fierce fighting often ensued.

In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries about fifty uprisings of the "lesser" men against the "finest" were recorded.

As the power of Kiev declined the princedom of Vladimir consolidated its power and came to play a more and more dominant role. This princedom, also known as the princedom of Vladimir-Suzdal, stretched from the Volga to the Klyazma. It was rich in woodland, honey and fish, and contained much fertile land. Its oldest centres were Rostov and Suzdal.

It was in this princedom that Moscow grew up. It was first mentioned in the chronicles in the year 1147, when Prince Yuri Dolgoruky (1090-1157) was recorded to have invited one of his allies, the prince of Chernigov, to Moscow and arranged a large feast in his honour. At that time Moscow was still a small settlement, occupying the territory of the modern Kremlin. It was situated in a well-fortified position on the high bank of the river Moskva and consisted of a small fortress surrounded by the dwellings of craftsmen and traders. Excavations during which arrow tips, needles and knives were unearthed have shown that this site had long been inhabited by Slavs.

Vladimir on the Klyazma was to become the capital of the princedom of Vladimir. In its immediate vicinity Prince Andrei (1111-1174) built himself the castle of Bogolyubov—hence his name Andrei Bogolyubsky. The town of Vladimir soon became an important political centre. A cruel and despotic ruler, Prince Andrei tried to dictate his will to the lesser princes, and the local nobility eventually rose up against him and slew him.

Soon after the death of Andrei Bogolyubsky, Vsevolod Big Nest (a nickname received on account of his large family), became the ruler of Vladimir-Suzdal (until 1212). He was also a despotic ruler and gave the boyars little freedom. In the famous mediaeval epic *The Lay of Igor's Host* a vivid picture is conjured up of how his army could drain the water of the Volga by splashing it with their oars and empty the Don by drinking it from their helmets, so powerful was Vsevolod's armed might.

The Culture of Ancient Rus

Ancient Rus had a flourishing and varied culture. The art of oral story-telling became a firm tradition, fairy-stories, tales and legends being handed down from generation to generation. Legendary figures who enjoyed great popularity were the mighty heroes Ilya Muromets and Dobrynya Nikitich, the shrewd and light-hearted Alyosha Popovich and the rich Novgorod merchant Sadko whose adventures took him to the underwater kingdom of the sea-king.



St. Sofia Cathedral in Novgorod. Eleventh century

These legends, fairy-tales and proverbs reflected the spirit and rich artistic imagination of the common folk, the lives they led with their joys and sorrows, their interpretation of the past and hopes for the future. Ancient Rus had its own written language before the advent of Christianity and this was drawn on for some letters by the Greek monks who devised the Cyrillic alphabet in the form in which it has come down to us in the majority of early Russian writings.

All books were hand-copied at that stage and goose quills or small twigs were employed for writing on fine calf hide. Birch bark was also used with letters either embossed or cut into it. Excavations in Novgorod brought to light a large number of mediaeval letters written on birch bark. Books took a long time to produce and were prized very highly.

The first Russian chronicles were drawn up in the monasteries, where year by year important events were recorded in chronological order. One of the earliest Russian chronicles was written by the monk Nestor in the Kiev-Pechersky monastery. This and other chronicles provide unique records of Russia's past and the study of her early history owes a great deal to them.

Ancient Rus was also famed for its skilled craftsmen in a great variety of crafts. The potters of that period produced a large quantity of elegant earthenware complete with attractive orna-

ment and coloured glaze—jugs, dishes, pots, bowls and children's toys. Another common practice was the smelting of metal in small furnaces: this was then used to fashion ploughshares, sickles, blades for wooden spades, knives, nails, horseshoes and locks. Of particular renown were the armourers, who fashioned double-edged swords, shields, suits of armour and chain mail.

Kiev jewellers and artisans were also famed for their fine metalwork, rich ornaments and tableware. They specialised in metal-chasing, engraving and gilding. Sometimes these artists decorated their work with whole scenes, for example an aurochs' horn decorated with silverwork might be complete with a whole scene from a Russian legend. Sometimes artists signed their compositions: for example in Novgorod magnificent drinking cups, decorated with chase-work were found with inscriptions on the bottom such as "Bratila's work", "Kosta's work". The accomplished masters taught their crafts to their apprentices, handing down to them the secrets of their art.

Another cultural landmark of this period is the mediaeval epos *The Lay of Igor's Host* dating from the XII century, which tells of Prince Igor Svyatoslavich's campaign against the Polovtsi in the year 1185. This work by an unknown author is one of the masterpieces of early Russian poetry. Composed shortly before the Mongol invasion, the *Lay* contains a plea for unity among the princes of Russia.

Chapter Four

THE TRANSITION TO FEUDALISM IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND CENTRAL ASIA

The Emergence of Feudal Relations in Iran

The Sassanid Empire held sway in Iran from the third to the seventh century. Its history was directly bound up with that of the Iranian people and their state, which formed the nucleus of the empire. Here the development of feudal relations evolved on the one hand from ancient traditions of slave-ownership as in India or the valley of the Yellow River, and on the other as a result of the collapse of the early society of the Iranian tribes based on clan and commune patterns. The socio-economic, cultural and political changes bound up with the emergence of a feudal society took place here within an ethnically homogeneous unit with a firm central nucleus (central and south-western Iran) as in Japan and Vietnam rather than as in the Arab Caliphate and the Chinese Empire.

The emergence of a class of peasants bound to the land of their masters took place as slaves working on private estates achieved the status of serfs and the communes gradually broke up. This also resulted in the appearance of a further new class, that of the *azats*, free prosperous mounted soldiers. Craft guilds grew up in the towns but they did not play any important role in the Iran of the early Middle Ages. A caste system, less rigid than the Indian one, had taken firm root by this time.

Politically and economically Iran was the strongest state in Western Asia during the third, fourth and fifth centuries. The main power was in the hands of the landed aristocracy and the Zoroastrian Church, which also owned vast lands and many slaves. The Zoroastrians worshiped the sun, fire, and the moon and stars. Zoroastrianism was adopted as the official religion of the Iranian people at the beginning of our era. This rich and influential religious institution constituted an important social force in Iran.

Iran was also to experience a crisis of its slave-holding society, when a movement of the exploited masses, Manichaeism, came into being. Yet, although the Manichaeans criticised the existing social structure as unjust, their protest was confined to passive resistance.

The absence of any significant domestic upheavals enabled the Sassanids to extend their territorial possessions in Transcaucasia, Mesopotamia and Asia Minor and to penetrate as far as Central Asia. These conquests, which brought considerable wealth to the slave-owning aristocracy and the empire's rulers, served to aggravate the mounting crisis within the Iranian slave-holding society. Hunger-strikes became more frequent and mass uprisings against the landowning aristocracy broke out, both among the former commune peasants who hoped to regain their former freedoms, and the *azats* who wished to assert their hold on small or medium-sized holdings. The rulers of the empire also hoped to gain land by seizing part of the property of the leading aristocratic families with which they contended in vain at the end of the fourth and beginning of the fifth century. A consolidation of the empire's central power was also made imperative by the threat on the eastern frontiers of an invasion by the nomad Ephtalites (the name given to the alliance of the Huns and east Iranian tribes, which later set up a feudal state).

Mazdakism

These various groups united their forces in the Mazdakite movement (named after its leader, Mazdak). Unlike their predecessors the Manichaeans, the Mazdakites called for open struggle against social evils and in particular demanded that surplus property should be taken away from the aristocracy. The Sassanian ruler, Kavadh I, entered an alliance with the Mazdakites and the *azats*, broke the power of the nobility, did away with the caste system and made Mazdakism the state religion. Soon after this victory there was a clash of interests between the broad mass of the peasantry and craftsmen on the one hand and the leading group of the insurgents, the *azats* and the court, which had come to support their interests, on the other. Once again the *azats* and Kavadh joined forces and together with the remaining representatives of the secular and religious aristocracy quelled the peasant uprising in the year 529.

The Sassanid Empire Under Chosroes I

Feudal Iranian society emerged in the fifth and early sixth centuries, above all during the rule of Chosroes I (531-579). With the victory over the aristocracy, the central power had acquired further vast lands, a considerable part of which was granted to the *azats*, now that state ownership had been reasserted. All the working people were obliged to pay a per capita tax on their land (instead of being subject to frequent requisitions), which on the whole was less of a burden than earlier taxes. The reassertion of state ownership of the land also made itself felt in the role the state played in the economy (the provision of loans to the farmers, etc.). The section of society which the monarchy relied on above all for support was the *azat* class, the military estate in that feudal society. The emperor's permanent army, unlike its Arab counterpart, consisted of mercenaries and together with the *azat* detachments and the ramified centralised bureaucracy staffed by *azats* formed the basis of the administrative apparatus in the Sassanid Empire.

The consolidation of feudal relations and the suppression of peasant unrest enabled the Sassanids to renew their expansion to the south and drive back the Ephtalites from their eastern frontiers. In the west after some initial successes Iran found itself involved in a long and costly war with Byzantium.

Arabia at the Beginning of the Seventh Century

The emergence of feudal relations in the Arabian peninsula and the immediately adjacent territories took place in the middle of the 1st millennium A. D., with the gradual collapse of slave-holding societies in the south and south-west of the peninsula, and the disintegration of the primitive clan system of the nomads in other areas.

By that time a large part of the herds and pastures were in the hands of the clan nobility, while there was land hunger among the poorer nomad tribes, particularly as subsistence livestock-breeding was not sufficient to support the growing population. Inter-tribal wars for land began, in the course of which various alliances were drawn up. The urge to achieve territorial expansion at the expense of neighbouring tribes grew steadily stronger. Another factor which promoted this drive towards unification was the increasing number of economic and political links between the more developed regions of Arabia where feudal patterns were already taking shape and between these regions and the nomad peoples.

A movement towards the unification of all the Arabs began which coincided with the feudalisation of both the nomad and settled peoples; the movement soon took on a religious character as well, propagating the new religion of Islam.

The Beginnings of Islam

Islam is a monotheistic religion, recognising one god Allah, represented on earth by his Prophets and their deputies, the caliphs. This religion demanded of its adherents unquestioning obedience to god and his servants: Moslem religious organisations had much in common with those of the state. At the outset the propagation of Islam was linked with the name of the Prophet Mohammed (570-632). The movement for religious unity among the Arab peoples and criticism of the practice of slavery brought Mohammed many followers from various social strata. An important aspect of Islam, which reflected the territorial aspirations and the drive for unification among the Arab peoples in the early feudal society (whose main source of livelihood was their herds), was the tendency to spread the "faith of the Prophet" by force into neighbouring lands.

The Unification of the Arabs and the Emergence of the Caliphate

The Mohammedan state of Medina which appeared in the first third of the seventh century soon began to extend its frontiers. This territorial expansion was facilitated by the spread of Islam: the most vital aspect of Islam was the struggle for the achievement of strong political power. The centralised theocracy instituted by Mohammed derived its support from troops which were remunerated not with land but shares of plunder captured in battle. This system (which did not exclude the presence of landowners among the warriors and commanders) received every support from the first caliphs (successors of the Prophet) and ensured the constant fighting efficiency of the army over a relatively long period. Another factor which contributed towards the consolidation of the central power was the collection of taxes from all holders of land, although the rates were less in the case of the feudal lords. Only a small part of the land was owned by the state (common land or that which was not under cultivation), while the bulk of it was either private or clan property.

The caliphs allocated plots from the state lands to those holding military or administrative office for as long as they were in office

and this marked the beginning of a new class of landowners and powerful nobles whose estates were dependent on their state service. These lands could be taken away from their owners on condition that the new owner carried out the duties required of him. This system of landholding, which soon spread to Asia Minor and North Africa, differed fundamentally from those to be found in the Far East and India.

By the middle of the seventh century Arabia was united but there was no hope of permanent stability in as far as this unity offered no solution to the problem of land distribution. After setting up powerful landed estates in Arabia the Arab chieftains aspired to extend them at the expense of neighbouring peoples.

Meanwhile, in the course of a large number of campaigns the nomads, for whom there was no place in feudal Arabia, became professional warriors and later landowners in the various countries they conquered. This served to consolidate feudal social patterns still further, and meant that the caliphs had reliable troops at their disposal, who were welded together by a common faith and ethnic background; these troops lived by plundering conquered lands.

In the seventh century the Arabs embarked on a major expedition against Byzantium and Iran, both of which had been weakened by mutual hostilities and domestic upheavals.

In the year 636 Byzantium was forced out of Syria and Palestine and in 651 the Arabs occupied Iran. A factor of no small importance in the success of these new conquerors was their religious tolerance (only economic methods were used to encourage conversion to Islam) and their respect for the property of all those who surrendered to them without resistance. This had the effect of neutralising considerable sections of the population in the conquered countries, particularly since at that period the caliphs restricted themselves to the collection of taxes without recruiting soldiers or doing away with the privileges of the local nobility. Furthermore, conquered territories were declared state property and while the local population were made subject to taxation the tax burden of the local chieftains was considerably reduced. Converts to Islam were freed from a special tax which infidels were obliged to pay.

The basis of the caliphate's economic system was conditional landownership in return for service, obligatory taxes and military service and the obligation to till land owned (the right to transfer being also ensured). This type of landownership was the predominant one after the mass redistribution by the caliphs of the lands of their enemies. Private and communal ownership of land were less common. The land of the powerful chieftains was generally worked by bond peasants.

The incorporation into the caliphate of new lands, economically independent of it and peopled by men of different races with their own history and traditions, led to disorder within the state, such as was to be found in all early feudal states.

Cavalry troops, who were only granted the right to a share of military booty, rose up under the leadership of Ali (602-661) against the Arab aristocracy, which had acquired large tracts of land. In the year 656 Ali became Caliph but the aristocracy rallied together and organised a resistance movement led by Moawiya of the Omayyads whose main stronghold was Syria, one of the most developed of the newly conquered lands.

Social contradictions in the course of the struggle between the cavalry and the nobility were soon to find expression in doctrinal controversy. Ali's supporters set up the Shiite sect* (which was soon to take root throughout Iran), while Moawiya's supporters set up the Sunnite sect, which after the latter's victory was to become the orthodox one. The Sunnite teaching is based on Moslem legends or *sunna* which arose later than the Koran (the Moslem holy book dictated by Mohammed) and which reflected the new developments to be seen in Arab society, its subsequent class stratification. Another sector of the cavalry set up the Khawarij sect, which propagated equality of all believers.

Arab Conquests

Relying on Syrian manpower and material resources and supported by the powerful chieftains Moawiya emerged victorious from these hostilities. He continued to use Syria as his administrative centre and embarked on cruel exploitation of the population of Iraq and Iran. The Omayyads (Moawiya's descendants) waged unsuccessful wars against Byzantium in Asia Minor, but their armies swept through North Africa ending Byzantine rule there. The local Berber chieftains, who had long been at war with the North African nomads, went over to the side of the Arabs. During the years 711-714 the Arab armies led by Tafiq conquered the Iberian peninsula and then invaded France. Their defeat at the battle of Poitiers (732) obliged the Arabs to withdraw beyond the Pyrenees which then became the border of the Arab Empire.

During this period Arab armies also appeared in Transcaucasia, north-west India and as far as Central Asia. Thus by the middle of the eighth century a giant Omayyad Empire had been

* The members of the Shiite sect recognised only the descendants of Caliph Ali as the spiritual leaders of the faithful.

set up, which owed its success to the combination of a mighty army, the small extent of the changes made in local government apparatuses, and the privileges granted to local chieftains, whose ranks were swelled by Arabs granted land by way of reward in the conquered countries.

The Omayyad Empire

The reign of the Omayyad dynasty (661-750) was marked by a rapid growth of close contacts between the Arabs and local rulers despite the fact that the Arab element predominated (in the state language, methods of labour exploitation and tax collection, religion, the fiscal and legal systems). Yet by the beginning of the eighth century mass conversion to Islam led to a decline in the taxes gleaned from the non-Moslems, which undermined the caliphate's economic power.

The latter-day Omayyad caliphs introduced sharp increases in taxes: the military expenditure involved in maintaining the unity of the enormous empire could no longer be met through the exploitation of the enormous subject territories. The first half of the eighth century was marked by a whole series of rebellions in the conquered lands which eventually spread to Syria itself. A great uprising in Central Asia which then spread to Iran and Iraq brought about the downfall of the Omayyads. Yet power was not taken over by the insurgents but the members of the Abbasid family, who exploited the turbulent situation to their own advantage: the caliphs of this dynasty sought their main support in the Iraqi province of the empire, which had been exposed to very strong Arab influences, and made Baghdad their capital (750-1258).

The Abbasid Caliphate

The enormous empire of the Omayyads started to collapse a mere six years after the Abbasids came to power. Despite all the efforts of the caliphs, the army in the conquered territories turned into a class of landowners of varying degrees of wealth and power, who were more closely bound up with the places where they lived than with the centre of the caliphate, and no longer felt the need for the latter's support.

Although the reign of the Abbasid dynasty saw the steady disintegration of the caliphate, the eighth and ninth centuries also saw a great rise in the economy and culture of the Arab world, particularly in its centre, Iraq. Here was not only a comparatively uniform feudal society to be found over a large territory, but

social consolidation was also furthered by a rapid development of agriculture, crafts and trade. At that time the Arab countries were among the most advanced in the world. Arab trade routes spread far across Europe, Asia and Africa. The distribution of booty no longer represented a major form of economic exploitation. The main form of land distribution was the granting of tracts of uncultivated land—the property of the caliphs—to administrators in return for their service to the state. Privately-owned lands and the caliph's property accounted for large areas of land. The owners of lands which were dependent on state office, regardless of their social background, were subject to military service, and by the end of the caliphate's rule they were obliged to bring detachments of armed retainers to battle with them. The peasants who worked these estates paid taxes to the state and rent to their masters. Land taxes accounted for the bulk of the state revenue.

As in other states, so in the Arab Empire lands granted for state service gradually became private property. Here the process took place in the ninth century. An important part in this process was played by growth of the landed estates (or *waqfs*) in the hands of Moslem religious institutions. These lands were neither subject to land taxes nor were their inhabitants liable for military service. Part of these *waqfs* were only nominally owned by religious institutions, since while local chieftains made a gift of them to their spiritual mentors, in practice they kept the bulk of the revenue gleaned from them for themselves. As more and more of such lands became hereditary landed estates and *waqfs* the peasants became increasingly dependent on their masters and less and less so on the state.

Yet the state continued to demand half their earnings, which, since the private landowners in their turn were also putting more pressure on the peasants, meant that their position was much more difficult than before. The lot of the non-Arab peasants was particularly hard: all the peasants suffered from the almost universal transition from taxes in kind to money taxes and the resultant spread of usury.

The Decline of the Caliphate

As discontent among the peasantry mounted, particularly in the outlying non-Arab parts of the empire, a struggle broke out between the powerful landowners and the central power as the former sought to assert their economic and political independence. The caliphate had been obliged to grant wide authority to provincial governors because of the overall inefficiency of the state

apparatus and gradually started to lose control over them. The independent Tulunid dynasty emerged in Egypt and the Tahirid dynasty in Iran, to name but two examples. So as to counteract these separatist tendencies the caliphs sought to strengthen the state apparatus and created the office of vizier (ministers of state directly responsible to the caliph), but it proved impossible to restore the empire's former unity. The main bastion of the caliph's power—the monolithic army of Arab nomads, living on battle plunder and without roots—had disappeared. The mercenary army consisting of Berbers, Khorasans and soldiers from among other subject peoples proved highly unreliable.

Although the decline of the empire's central power was deferred by the fact that the caliph was universally accepted as the spiritual leader of Islam, from the ninth century onwards the caliphate proved unequal to its basic function, that of keeping the masses under control. The Babek uprising (816-837) in Azerbaijan and north-western Iran marked the beginning of the end for the caliphate. Soon revolts of the Iraqi peasants and the nomads of Northern Arabia (869-883) broke out and similar disturbances continued in the tenth century. Exploiting the weak position of the caliphate, Central Asia and Iran reasserted their independence in the second quarter of the ninth century and Syria, Egypt and Palestine followed suit in the second half of the ninth century. By the middle of the tenth century the caliphate was in control of nothing apart from Baghdad and its surrounding territory and in practice the caliph was nothing more than the religious leader of the Moslem world. In 1258 the Mongols captured Baghdad and the caliph was slain.

Arab Culture

The political sway of the Arab countries during the eighth, ninth and tenth centuries was accompanied by major cultural achievements, particularly in the central regions of the caliphate and the Iberian peninsula. Science made great advances, furthering and developing all that had been inherited from the Ancient World.

Particularly outstanding were the achievements in mathematics, astronomy, medicine, geography and history. The Arabs brought to Europe a number of Chinese discoveries, such as the compass, paper and gunpowder. Although much of their philosophy was inherited from the past, considerable new advances were made under the influence of Moslem religious teaching. Despite its religious essence Arab philosophy was also to exhibit rationalist aspects as well.

The Arabs made major contributions to the art of navigation, military strategy, a number of crafts and architecture. Arab literature flowered, with such writers of world stature as Ibn Ishaq and Tabari, while Moslem literature of the Middle East and Central Asia gave the world such great poets as Firdousi and Omar Khayyam.

Central Asia in the Fifth-Seventh Centuries

Feudal patterns of society in Central Asia emerged first of all among the farmer peoples of Khorezm, Sogdia, etc. In those lands a new class of dependent peasants—bond tenants—had emerged, as slaves were gradually granted plots of land and peasants from the former communes came to be exploited by the clan leaders. All the agrarian princedoms of Central Asia which were developing along feudal lines (they numbered more than 20) were obliged to pay tribute to the rulers of the feudal state of the nomad Ephtalites, but retained their independence in internal matters. Only Khorezm was fully independent.

In 567 the Ephtalites were defeated by the Turkic nomads and power passed into the hands of their *kagan* (or leader, later monarch). Here the situation was very different from that in the Arabian peninsula where feudal social patterns had taken shape simultaneously among the Arab farmers and the Arab nomads: the tillers of the land (Sogdians, Khorezmians) were of different racial stock from the nomads, adhered to a different religion and spoke another language. For this reason the feudal patterns in agricultural life did not bring any direct influence to bear on the social structure of the nomad Turkic tribes, and features of feudalism were not to develop until the sixth century. However, these differences did not prevent the oppressed Turkic nomads from joining forces with the impoverished Sogdian farmers in the uprising (583-586) against the nomad chieftains and the clan leaders. The suppression of this uprising led to still harsher exploitation of the former commune peasants. By the seventh century feudal social patterns had come to predominate among all the agrarian peoples of Central Asia.

The transition to more advanced social relations furthered the development of agriculture, the advance of the silk industry and irrigation systems. A large number of fortified towns sprang up but traders and craftsmen played a less important role than the clan leaders on whom a large section of the urban and village craftsmen were dependent. However, the Central Asian merchants, in particular the Sogdians, traded widely with all neighbouring countries, especially India and the Middle East. The main reli-

gion of these early class societies in Central Asia was Zoroastrianism.

The numerous princedoms of seventh-century Central Asia did not wage any major wars: after the decline of Turkic power the majority of them became independent. The completion of the subjugation of the peasants in these independent countries gave rise to resistance on their side which found expression in an uprising (end of the seventh and beginning of the eighth century); the doctrines adhered to by the insurgents had much in common with Mazdakite beliefs.

As feudalism was gradually adopted by the various peoples of Central Asia, a number of ethnic groups and their cultures were to gain prominence: those of Sogdia and Khorezm for example. Hitherto Central Asia had represented a more or less compact, homogeneous ethnic and cultural unit. Many works of Indian, Iranian and Christian literature were brought to these lands, local written languages were perfected, and trade and cultural links with India and China grew and strengthened. Schools of painting and sculpture started to emerge in Central Asia which were quite distinct from Iranian and Indian artistic traditions.

The Arab armies invaded Central Asia in 651 but met with fierce resistance, which was only broken after a long war (705-715). A factor of considerable importance in this defeat was the lack of unity among the individual feudal rulers, some of whom even betrayed their fellows. The devastation of the country and in particular the irrigation system, the impoverishment of the peasantry, the enforced resettlement of some of the inhabitants and the forcible introduction of Islam led to uprisings which were to keep breaking out all the time, until the states of Central Asia eventually succeeded in re-establishing their independence. But while the revolts of the period 705-737 had expressed the common interests of both the peasants and the nomads, and the local feudal lords, by the middle of the eighth century the clan leaders no longer associated themselves with the movement and large numbers of them were converted to Islam. Gradually there emerged a new social group consisting of landowners and warriors. With the support of this new class the Arab conquerors were able to employ methods of economic coercion so as to convert a considerable part of the population to Islam, introduce state ownership of the land and other feudal institutions.

However the power of the caliphate was not firmly founded. The uprising of the year 747, which started in Central Asia, brought about the fall of the Omayyads. The peoples of Central Asia rose up against their successors in 751, 776-783, 806-810; the struggle to suppress the insurgents required not only the expedition of part of the caliphate's troops but constant concessions

to the local nobility, in particular the Tajik nobles. In the eighth century the Tajik nobility had already acquired the right to conditional ownership of large parts of the land formerly owned by the communes: from that time onwards the majority of the peasantry lived in feudal bondage. In 819 the Tajik chieftains founded an independent state, and the local Samanid dynasty was to rule Central Asia till 999.

The Peoples of Transcaucasia

In the countries of Transcaucasia—Armenia, the Georgian princedoms of Kartli and Lazica, and the Albanian princedoms, Albania and Arran, which had attained different levels of social and economic development—the transition to feudal economic patterns began in the fourth century, when the warlords took over the land of the communes which were rapidly falling into decline. New production relations also began to take shape at this time in the estates of the slave-owning nobles. These two processes leading up to the formation of a dependent peasantry were taking place throughout Transcaucasia. The Christian Church was also to play an important part in consolidating these new production relations: it had been firmly established in all the countries of Transcaucasia by the fourth century. Here there was neither state ownership of land nor any unified systems of rents and taxes; the whole population was divided into three estates—landowning warriors, the priesthood and the dependent peasantry, bound to the landowners' service.

The fifth and sixth centuries saw important cultural and economic advances and the spread of prosperous trading towns at strategic points along the international trade routes. Local dynasties ruled Transcaucasia under the nominal control of Byzantium or Iran. Various attempts on the part of Iran to turn this nominal control into something more concrete met with strong resistance from the peoples of Transcaucasia. For example, an attempt to assimilate the Armenians, Georgians and Albanians (forbears of the Azerbaijanians) accompanied by an increase in taxes (including those collected from the church), a ban on Christianity and the ousting of the Armenian princes from their leading offices of state led to the uprising of 450-451 under the Armenian commander Vardan Mamikonyan. The insurgents were defeated but attempts at assimilation were abandoned for some time.

Another attempt to set up firm Iranian rule in this part of the world led to a large-scale uprising (481-484), as a result of which the Sassanids were obliged once again to abandon their objective. The last attack of this kind was made in the reign of Chosroes I

(531-579) when taxes were raised and local administrative officials were replaced by Iranians. The reaction to this was yet another mass uprising of the Armenians, supported by the Georgians, Albanians and Byzantium. In the peace treaty concluded in 591 Iran abandoned its claim to a large part of Transcaucasia and in 628 the whole of it became independent under nominal Byzantine rule. In the course of the incessant wars of the fifth and sixth centuries the *azats* grew gradually more and more powerful and came to make increasing demands on their peasants. However, the continual harassing from Iran and Byzantium and ethnic differences made the setting up of a united state with a centralised government and a system of state landownership in this part of the world quite impossible. The frequent wars also hampered the growth of large trading centres.

The Arab chieftains established themselves in Transcaucasia only after 60 years of bitter fighting; the Arab governors forcibly converted the people to Islam and introduced their particular system of land exploitation. However in Transcaucasia, unlike the other parts of the Arab empire, Islam hardly took root at all and state ownership of the land was only introduced in Albania. Very few Arabs settled in Transcaucasia and their position there was extremely tenuous: in times of peace the duties of caliphate officials were limited to the collection of taxes. However, these taxes were exorbitant and gave rise to many uprisings both among the peasants and the town dwellers which helped to modify the appetites of the foreign conquerors. Uprisings in Armenia in 748-750 and 774-775 obliged the caliph to cut down taxes; in 781 and 795 similar uprisings took place in Albania. The princes of Armenia and Arran gave their support to all these uprisings hoping to overthrow the caliph's power. The most important of the Albanian uprisings was that led by the Hurramites and their leader Babek (816-837), who was supported by the Armenians. Babek's followers succeeded in inflicting a number of defeats on the caliph's armies who were hard put to it to suppress them. Fourteen years later yet another uprising broke out. Although it was cruelly suppressed in 855, the Arabs left Transcaucasia soon afterwards. The wars against the peoples of Transcaucasia deprived the caliphate of more wealth than the exploitation of those lands brought into its treasury.

Chapter Five

WESTERN EUROPE IN THE ELEVENTH-FIFTEENTH CENTURIES

The Separation of Craft Industry from Agriculture and the Rise of the Towns

Although the production forces developed slowly in the early Middle Ages, nevertheless progress was steady and the first result of this process was a new social division of labour which facilitated further economic progress throughout Europe. Gradually a clear dividing line came to be drawn between industry and agriculture. More and more towns sprang up and started to grow in size, they developed as centres of industry and trade and a further result of this development was the emergence of commodity-money relations.

The growing needs of mediaeval society from the eleventh century onwards compelled those peasants who plied trades in addition to their main agricultural work, setting themselves up as blacksmiths, weavers, tailors and cobblers, to spend more and more time at these subsidiary trades and less and less in the fields. These peasants often left the villages and set up house in places where it was easy to sell their wares and receive in exchange for them the farm produce which they needed to feed themselves and their families (at crossroads, on the banks of rivers, in places where they were afforded the protection of castles or monasteries).

Merchants also gradually came to settle in such places and at last succeeded in re-establishing trade which had declined sharply since the fall of the Roman Empire.

The first kind of trading to be re-established in Europe was trade in expensive and easily transportable goods from distant lands, in particular those of the East, such as cloth from Byzantium, ivory and gold from Asia Minor and India, and perfumes from Arabia. Gradually, however, the merchants who settled alongside the craftsmen started to sell the wares produced by



The walls of Carcassonne (France), thirteenth century

local craftsmen and in this way enabled the craftsmen to spread their wares beyond the confines of their immediate districts. Thus new European towns developed as centres of trade and industry.

Initially these towns were little more than large villages, whose inhabitants engaged in agriculture as well as trades and had their pastures, arable land, woods and lakes or rivers. But gradually industry was to demand more and more of the time and effort of the working men in the towns and more often than not they were obliged to exchange their wares with peasants from the neighbouring villages so as to obtain their essential raw materials and the produce they needed to keep their families.

Guilds had developed, whose members were small independent producers working on their own small premises and employing journeymen and apprentices, the number of which (just as the organisation of work and production as a whole) were subject to strict stipulations laid down in guild charters. The main purpose of these charters was to establish and preserve uniform living and working conditions for the full members of the guild, namely master-craftsmen, for journeymen were in reality hired workmen just as apprentices who paid for their instruction by their work.

The interests of the journeymen and apprentices were not compatible with those of their masters and the class struggle between

these two groups grew progressively more acute as the masters gradually came to constitute a privileged section of society and ceased to allow journeymen to encroach on their territory.

The Conflict Between the Towns and the Landowners

The population concentrated in the towns was far more close-knit than in the countryside, and was able to stand up to the landed nobility on whose lands the towns had been founded. Eventually, either via direct conflict or by purchasing various rights, many towns became self-governing communes, almost completely independent of the seigniors. The towns also gained the right to have their own town council, elect its officers, buy freedom from taxation, military and labour service and assure all inhabitants their personal freedom. It was not for nothing that the saying went in those days: "Town air makes a man free."

The towns of Italy—in particular Venice, Genoa, Amalfi, Naples, Palermo, Milan and Florence—were the first to expand and restore the trade links with the East, beginning from as early as the ninth and tenth centuries. The merchants of these towns prospered rapidly from trading in goods from the East and within a short space of time the towns not only gained the right of self-government from the seigniors on whose lands they stood, whether bishops or landed nobles, but became independent republics in their own right. The towns of Flanders were extremely prosperous thanks to their textiles which were highly valued in Northern Europe, and in the twelfth century the towns of south-west Germany also started to gain prominence. Spectacular urban development began in England and France in the eleventh century, and trade and industry were flourishing in their towns by the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

Advanced Feudal Society

The results of this urban development and the expansion of industry and trade were so great and diverse throughout Europe that the time of their emergence and subsequent development may well be regarded as the opening of the period of advanced feudalism, when the productive forces (i.e., agricultural and industrial techniques and working skills adopted by those participating in the small-scale production typical of feudal society)

had reached the highest level of development possible in small-scale feudal economy.

Indeed, urban industry as it developed provided the agricultural labourers with sufficient iron implements, which were now to be found even on the smallest of peasant holdings. The growing needs of the townspeople for agricultural produce led the peasants to put more land under cultivation, and to the development of stockbreeding, ploughing techniques, market-gardening and the planting of orchards. While there were significant advances in agriculture, the most important improvements in techniques and skills were in urban industry, and consequently it was in the towns that the productive forces exhibited the most impressive development in the Middle Ages. Industrial centres grew up which exported their products throughout Europe (centres of the textile, wool, silk and later cotton and leather industries, metalwork, glass and pottery, etc.).

The development of the European towns and the resulting advance of the productive forces also proved decisive factors in both social and political development. The towns which had become craft and trade centres were the places where the ruling class was able to gather in revenues, which sometimes exceeded those from the villages many times over. However, the artisans and the merchants stood together to defend their interests more than the peasants, and usually enjoyed personal freedom. From the very outset they stood up against the landed nobility and their decrees.

This meant that the peasantry, if it did not actually win allies in the ranks of the townspeople, at least found sympathisers in its struggle against the landowners and was thus able at last to lighten its burden considerably.

Urban development also brought in its wake important changes in the political life of Europe at this period. The merchants and craftsmen were interested in expanding their markets and trade links in general and thus sought to avoid local feuds and wars and to ensure at least a minimum of law and order in the lands where they carried on their activity (first and foremost this implied the area in which men used mutually intelligible languages). For this reason town dwellers always supported centralised governments possessing the necessary authority to put an end to the arbitrary violence of the landed nobles, who even regarded highway robbery as a supreme expression of noble valour. Almost simultaneously with the wave of urban development there came into being spontaneous alliances between the European kings and their subjects in the towns. The towns helped the kings both by means of money and armed detachments to ensure the obedient submission of their vassals. This in its turn led to the

consolidation of a number of centralised European states, forerunners of the present-day major powers, by the end of the fifteenth century.

The Causes for the Crusades

The completion of the establishment of the feudal system in the eleventh century throughout almost the whole of Europe and the consolidation of more or less stable order led to a definite rise in the productive forces, a revival of industry and trade, a clearer division between crafts and agriculture, the rise of towns as industrial and trade centres. The revival of foreign trade, first and foremost with the more culturally advanced states of the East aroused new interest in these countries among the peoples of Europe. This new interest led to expeditions of European armies to the East, known as the Crusades. Representatives of various classes and social strata, discontent with their lot at home, took part in these "Holy wars". The backbone of the crusade armies was formed by the expanding lower echelons of the ruling class—knights, who were generally the younger sons of the landed nobility and who as a rule inherited no land from their fathers, and also well-to-do peasants and even serfs, taken into the service of knights to administer their domains (ministerials). Since they were badly equipped, they indulged in highway robbery, plundering their own men and strangers and ready to risk any adventure.

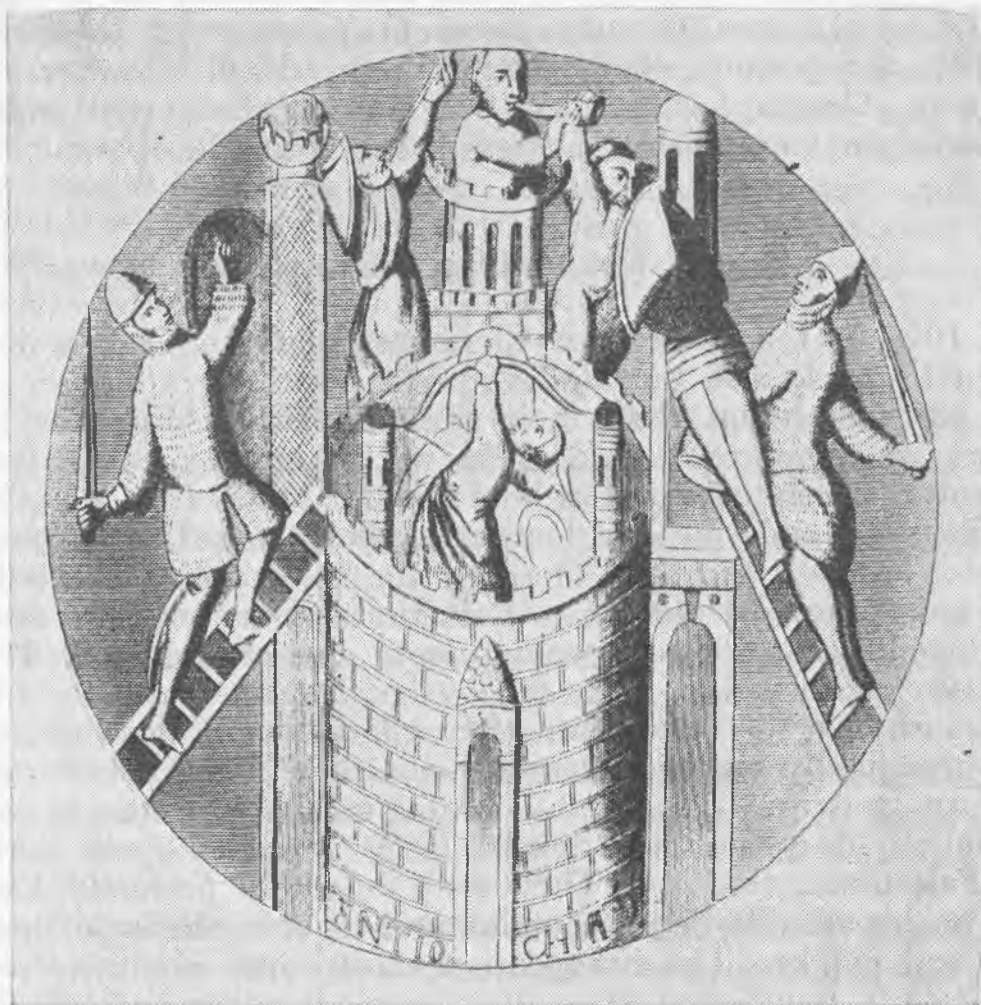
At that time discontent was rife among the peasants who found it difficult to reconcile themselves to the exorbitant obligations demanded of them. There was a succession of bad harvests in the years 1095-1097 and the peasants were reduced to eating grass, bark and clay. There were even instances of cannibalism. Many peasants left the lands to which they were bound in search of a less burdensome existence. When armies were mustered for the Crusades, whole crowds of these peasants set off to the East.

Many towns, in particular those of Italy, also took part in this movement hoping to expand their profitable trade in Eastern luxuries.

The Catholic Church also played an important part in rallying men to the banners of the Crusaders, calling on them to liberate Syria and Palestine from the Turks, the "Holy Land" where Christ had lived and where the Christian shrine of the Holy Sepulchre was situated. In actual practice the Church was pursuing two aims through this policy—firstly, it was expanding its power and influence, and secondly, it was temporarily removing from Europe large numbers of knights who were prone to looting churches and monasteries.

Byzantium in the Seventh to Eleventh Centuries

The Crusades were inevitably of immediate concern to Byzantium, which for centuries had been waging costly wars with her neighbours—Iran, the Arabs, the Bulgarians and the Seljuk Turks. After a series of major military successes, in particular



The taking of Antioch by the Crusaders. A 12th-century stained glass window in Saint-Denis Abbey (France)

during the reign of the Macedonian dynasty (867-1056), when the Bulgarians were defeated, parts of Syria, Armenia and Mesopotamia were reconquered from the Arabs and the alliance with Ancient Rus was consolidated, Byzantine power began rapidly to decline.

By the eleventh century the feudal system was well established: the free peasantry had disappeared, while there was an increase in the number of large estates in the hands of the nobility. The introduction of serfdom, more intense forms of exploitation and

heavier taxation gave rise on several occasions to popular revolts. The emergence of feudal production relations and intensified land division led to frequent feuds between the landed nobles. Rivalry for the throne amongst members of the ruling class also grew more intense. All these factors served to undermine the power of the Byzantine state and it became more and more difficult both to maintain internal order and to defend the frontiers. By the time a new dynasty came to power, the Comnenine dynasty, the position of the empire was critical. However, the Emperor Alexius Comnenus (1081-1118) and his descendants succeeded in temporarily reconsolidating Byzantine power.

The First Crusade

In 1095 at the Council of Clermont (southern France) Pope Urban II proclaimed the First Crusade, promising all those who took part absolution from their sins and rich booty. The first armies which started the Crusade were composed of the poor peasantry. Poorly armed crowds of peasant soldiers reached Constantinople, plundering and looting as they went. The Byzantine emperor hastily urged them to set out for Asian shores where they were soon routed by the Turks. Pathetic stragglers of the peasant detachments returned to Constantinople and started to wait for the main expeditionary force led by knights which set out from Europe in 1096 for Jerusalem. After a long and difficult journey this force finally reached Jerusalem in 1099. They took the city by storm and then instigated a brutal massacre of the Moslem population. A number of crusader states were set up in Syrian and Palestinian territory. They were ruled by powerful European nobles who headed a complex and strict hierarchy of lesser lords and knights. The European peasants, just like their local counterparts, found themselves in economic bondage and had thus achieved no easing of their lot. The local population revolted and in 1144 the Crusaders lost Edessa, one of their most important strongholds. A Second Crusade organised with the aim of recapturing the town was unsuccessful.

In the middle of the twelfth century there emerged a new champion of the small Arab and Turkish states, Saladin, a talented commander who succeeded in uniting these small states and then defeating the Crusaders (1187) and capturing Jerusalem. The subsequent Crusades, of which there were five, organised on a large scale also proved unsuccessful. During the Fourth Crusade western knights plundered Constantinople (1204) thus exposing for all to see that the principal aim of the Crusades was not to rescue the Holy Sepulchre but to plunder and loot, since the

Byzantine capital was a Christian city. Soon afterwards the Turks drove the Crusaders out of Asia Minor. Their last stronghold in Palestine, the town of Acre, was taken by the Turks in 1291 and that year is regarded as marking the end of the Crusades.

Although the Crusades did not achieve the political objectives hoped for by the European knights, the movement had important consequences for European culture. The Europeans came into contact with the more advanced culture of the East, and adopted the more advanced forms of land cultivation and craft techniques already common practice in that part of the world. They brought back with them from the East many new and useful plants such as buckwheat, rice, citrus trees, sugar cane and apricots, not to mention such important discoveries as silk-making and glass-blowing.

England

In the fifth century, this island inhabited by Celtic tribes was invaded by Germanic tribes—the Angles, Saxons, Jutes and Thuringians. The latter set up seven barbarian kingdoms, which gradually united to form three kingdoms during the sixth and seventh centuries, and subsequently one Anglo-Saxon state under Egbert, King of Wessex, at the beginning of the ninth century (829). The emergence of feudal economic patterns in the Anglo-Saxon kingdom began at this period and by the latter half of the eleventh century, when the throne was seized by the Norman barons led by William of Normandy [to go down in history as William the Conqueror (1066)], the feudal system was already well established.

The Norman barons who came to England with William and seized the Anglo-Saxon lands completed the process of feudalisation in their capacity as representatives of a more advanced feudal state. Since they found themselves among a local population hostile to the foreign conquerors it was imperative for them to stand together to defend their interests and maintain strict discipline. For this reason they supported the power and authority of the central rule of their Duke who had now become King of England. William, who was obliged to divide up the conquered lands among the barons who had accompanied him on this venture and also in the desire to clarify what revenue he would have at his disposal as king, arranged for a survey of the lands of his realm to be drawn up (detailing their extent, value, ownership and liabilities). This survey was drawn up on a basis of testimonies of the local inhabitants which were given under oath, requiring the whole truth and nothing but the truth, as if they were standing

before Christ at the Last Judgement, on Doomsday, the end of the world. Thus the book recording all these statistical data and which has been preserved till the present day is known as the "Domesday Book".

In this book the peasants, whose position was difficult to define, were often referred to as villeins, that is serfs, and in this respect the survey marked the completion of the establishment of the feudal system. Yet it is important to remember that part of the English peasantry retained its freedom. The Anglo-Saxon barons who were unwilling to come to terms with the new order were replaced by Norman barons. A considerable part of the English peasantry became bondmen.

Only in one respect did the English feudal system differ from that of the continent: the power of the king in England, for the above-mentioned reasons, was sufficiently strong to compel all members of the ruling class, from the nobles to the poorest knights, to serve the crown loyally. The outward manifestation of this royal power was the requirement that all members of the ruling class should take an oath of allegiance to the king whoever their immediate liege-lords might be.

As a result, England was to be spared the difficult and tortuous road to unity which all the continental states had to traverse; English society suffered not so much from a lack of strong central power (which beset the other states of Europe, where the liberties the barons allowed themselves undermined both political administration and economic progress), as from too strong a central power which was often abused in the interests of the ruling class.

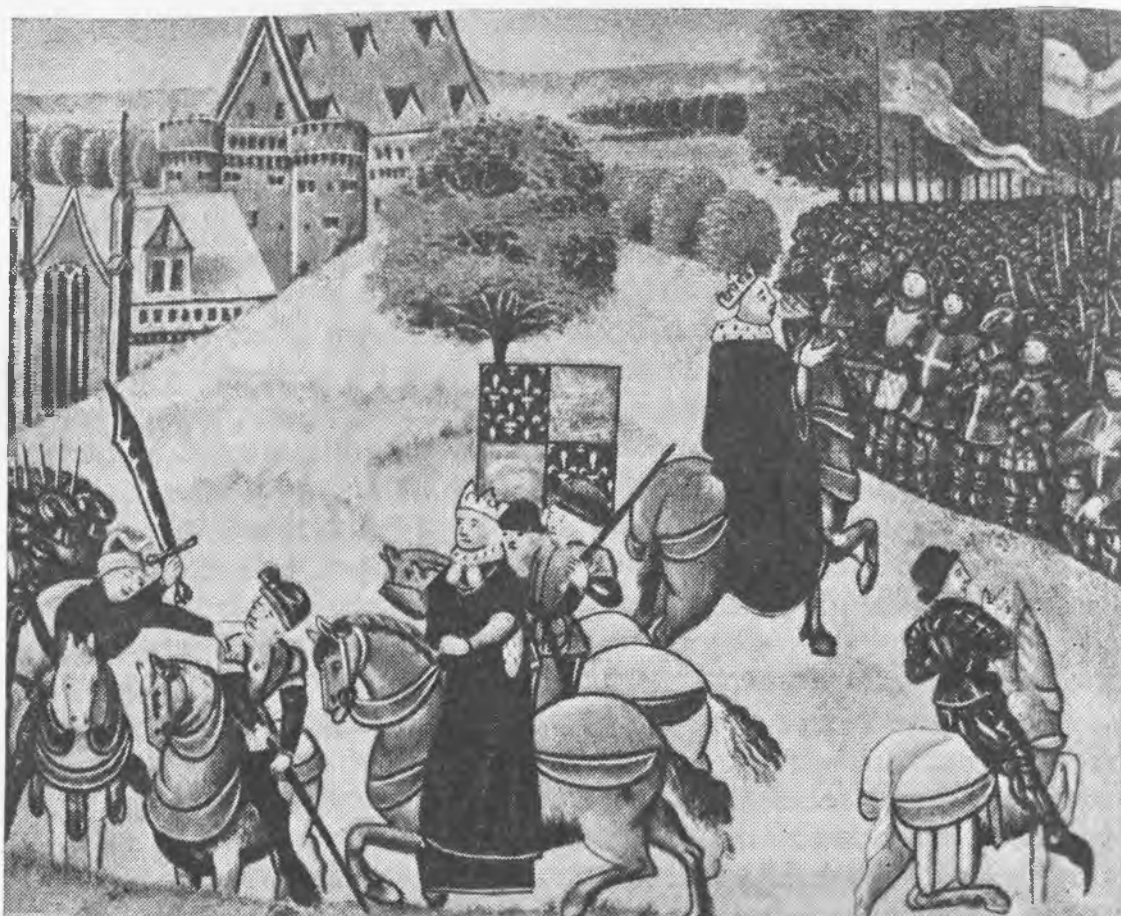
The Beginnings of Parliament

The existence of extremely firm central power in England led very soon to a number of attempts to limit royal power. In the reign of King John, nicknamed Lackland (1199-1216), the barons forced the king to sign the Magna Carta (1215), which limited his power to alter and modify the property rights and privileges of the barons. In 1265 the first parliament was convened. This institution of the thirteenth century had little in common with the English parliament of today, a bourgeois constitutional institution, although the latter traces its origins back to this first parliament and English historians and lawyers are prone to stress the long history of the English constitution. The English parliament from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century was a Council of the three estates (Lords Spiritual and Temporal and the Commons—representatives of the counties and cities), similar to those later to be set up in other states on the continent. However, England's

rapid economic development, the growth of her towns and trading network soon made her ruling class and towns prosperous, so that the restriction of the king's powers soon took firm root. As early as the fourteenth century the king was deprived of the right to institute new taxes and collect those already established without the consent of parliament. Parliament, in which both the ruling class and the cities and counties were represented, became an increasingly influential political institution.

Urban expansion and the development of commodity-money relations led to consequences which were to become typical for the rest of Western Europe. They led to substantial changes in the structure of the basic administrative and economic unit of feudal society, the manorial estate. The barons started to demand money payment (commutation) from their peasants instead of payment in kind, now that the peasants were starting to sell their surplus produce at local markets and in neighbouring towns. Such commutation had become almost universal by the fourteenth century and had significant repercussions. The landowning nobles began to neglect the farms in their domains and hired out this land to the peasants in strips. Since their domains as such no longer existed, labour services were no longer required of the peasants and they were freed in return for redemption payments. Yet the landowners, being in need of money, proceeded to enclose communal lands so as to expand sheep-breeding, which brought in considerable revenue. The new "freedom" going hand in hand with increased economic independence led to a considerable deterioration in the peasants' living conditions. This state of affairs was to appear throughout most of Europe and subsequently led to a number of large peasant uprisings—that led by Wat Tyler in England, Dolcino in Italy and the Jacquerie in France.

The direct cause of the Peasants' Revolt in England (1381) was the introduction of a universal tax, known as the poll-tax, to bring in money for the war being fought against France (the Hundred Years' War). The administrative officials who collected this tax resorted to many unjust and violent measures. The people rose up in protest and in a short time the uprising spread to a number of counties. The peasant army marched on London and the city's poor opened the gates to them. One of the peasant detachments was led by a roofer, by the name of Wat Tyler. The insurgents put the following demands to the king: complete freedom for all peasants; the substitution of labour services by small money dues; the granting to the peasants of the right to sell freely the produce from their holdings. In alarm the king and the barons at first promised concessions and some of the peasant detachments dispersed and went home. However, at one of the confrontations with the king Wat Tyler was treacherously



The slaying of Wat Tyler. Fifteenth-century miniature

murdered. Seriously alarmed by the turn events had taken, the barons mustered their troops and meted out cruel punishment to the rebellious peasants. However, fearing possible recurrences of such an uprising the landed nobles continued to grant more and more of their peasants their freedom and by the end of the fifteenth century there were no serfs left in England. However, the peasants, who still “held” their land from their liege-lords, were obliged to pay rent for it.

The Wars of the Roses

Meanwhile the Hundred Years’ War with France continued. In the course of this war the kings of England relied in the main on mercenary soldiers, but side by side with the latter fought the English barons with their armed retainers, plundering French lands and growing rich in the process. Despite various victories, such as the Battle of Agincourt in 1415, the English were eventually obliged to withdraw from France. After this the English

barons proceeded to wage feuds among themselves on English soil, plundering their native land. In the second half of the fifteenth century they joined forces in two alliances which rallied to the support of two noble families, the houses of Lancaster and York, whose emblems were a red and white rose respectively, which vied with each other for the throne. In the course of this war, the class of powerful barons which had constituted the main bastion of opposition to political unity and centralised power, started to disintegrate as a close-knit group. The second half of the fifteenth century saw the downfall of both these houses and the emergence of a new royal dynasty, that of the Tudors, when Henry Tudor (Henry VII) came to the throne. All progressive forces in the country—including the section of the nobility (the landed gentry) which had started to engage in large-scale sheep-breeding and was later to constitute the bourgeois class, and the existing bourgeoisie—willingly accorded their support to the strong centralised monarchy.

By the end of the fifteenth century England had become a strong centralised state with an active foreign policy, which she was able to pursue successfully, from the point of view of the interests of the ruling class, having the necessary means at her disposal. In the first place, the ruling class was better organised and more disciplined than those of the other European countries; secondly, representatives of the now free English peasantry willingly enlisted as bowmen in the army and fought bravely in the frequent battles of those times; thirdly, the English landed ruling class had vested interests in the expansion of trade which meant that there soon no longer existed insuperable barriers preventing the penetration of leading burghers into the ranks of the ruling class or the landed nobility turning their energies to the field of industry and trade. The landed nobles organised small-scale wool production on their own manorial estates and made large profits selling this wool in the markets of Flanders and even Italy. The English nobles soon developed a taste for large purses and profitable enterprises and in comparison with their French counterparts made efficient entrepreneurs: by the thirteenth century they already understood the advantages to be gained from successful trade policies pursued by their government, even if those policies involved the risk of war, temporary setbacks or financial ruin, particularly since they had at their disposal an industrious and, taken all in all, obedient peasantry. Last but not least, we must take into account the role of the overall economic base of political unity—the first stages of the formation of an economic network on the territory of a future politically united state, or, in other words, the emergence of a home market.

France

The unification of France was a more tortuous process. It was no mere coincidence that France is taken as the classic example of the feudal state. It was here that political subdivisions had taken particularly firm root. Each seignury was an independent economic and political unit in its own right. The Carolingian kings gradually lost more and more power and by the tenth century all that was left of that power was its illustrious name, which no longer had any real foundation.

The first king of the new Capetian dynasty, Hugh Capet, was elected to the throne (987) only because he was weak and powerless to oppose the nobles, who chose to ignore royal authority. The new dynasty owned the small dukedom of the Ile-de-France in the centre of the country, where the Seine (flowing through Paris) and the Loire (flowing through Orleans) meet. However, its very geographical position at the confluence of two large rivers linking two large towns was soon to turn this dukedom into the economic centre of the country which was to accomplish the political unity of the whole of France, inhabited by people of French origin.

The first kings of this dynasty were only *primi inter pares* in the true sense of the word, no stronger and often weaker than their vassals. All the nobles, both the greater and lesser among them, lived in stone castles built at high vantage points or on impregnable rocks. From these strongholds they ordered the lives of their serfs and the defence of their fortresses and made constant war on each other bringing ruin on each other's retainers. The peasant masses were subject to ever harsher exploitation. The peasants were obliged to pay for their land in the form of quit-rent and corvée. They were only allowed to mill their grain at their seigneur's mill and for this they were obliged to pay him with part of their grain; they also had to bake their bread in his ovens and make their wine in his wine-press. In order to reach the town the peasants were obliged to pay road, bridge and market tolls, etc. The nobles acquired the right to pass judgement on their peasants and in general treat them as chattels. The peasants frequently rose up against their masters, but these uprisings were always suppressed.

From the twelfth century onwards the French kings succeeded in gradually consolidating their power. The kings of the Capetian dynasty (987-1328) gradually asserted their authority, first over the landed nobles in their own dukedom and then outside their own lands. The Valois dynasty which followed (1328-1589) completed the task of uniting French lands under the crown. The reason lying behind the successful undertaking of these two dynas-

ties is to be found in France's economic development and the changing needs of French society, various sectors and classes of which had by this stage begun to set store by their country's political unity.

The towns and townspeople played a decisive role in the consolidation of the king's authority. The craftsmen and traders who sold their wares and the work they produced had a vested interest in the security of internal trade routes and the maintenance of law and order at home. They were prepared to support the king's ascendant power against those landed nobles who undermined law and order by warring against their neighbours and sometimes by outright highway robbery. On the other hand, the kings of that period, in as far as they helped the townspeople in their conflict with the landed nobles, promoted trade and industry in the towns and thus furthered their country's economic development.

The king thus stood for order amidst disorder and national unity as opposed to the disruptive separatism of his rebellious vassals, the landed nobles. All progressive elements which emerged during the feudal era gravitated towards royal power, and vice versa. The alliance between the king and the townspeople started to take shape as early as the tenth century. On various occasions it was disrupted by various kinds of conflict but always reasserted itself, growing gradually stronger until the kings finally emerged victorious in their struggle with the barons and succeeded in uniting the whole country under their real authority.

The Hundred Years' War. Joan of Arc

A feature of the unification of France was the fact that the French kings were obliged to carry on a grim struggle not only against their own vassals but also against enemies from abroad.

These enemies in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were the English barons, who waged war against France over a period of more than a hundred years (1337-1453). In the course of this war, large-scale peasant uprisings broke out in both France and England which can both be traced to the same causes: the tremendous sacrifices demanded from the masses on account of the war.

The entire war was waged on French soil, and at first the French suffered one reverse after another. The armies led by the French knights suffered two routs at the hands of the English at Crécy (1346) and Poitiers (1356). At the battle of Poitiers the flower of French chivalry was destroyed and King John the Good was taken prisoner by the English. Soldiers of both armies indulged in frequent lootings of the peasants in many parts of the country. The government, headed by Charles, the dauphin, demanded



The arrival of Joan of Arc at the castle of Chinon. Fifteenth-century tapestry

high taxes for ransom money to free the king. All this gave rise to deep discontent among the masses. The northern towns led by Paris demanded that Charles should hand power over to the States-General* and when he proceeded to dissolve the latter, an uprising broke out in Paris, which was led by the mayor of Paris Etienne Marcel, a rich cloth merchant. The revolt of the northern towns was followed by a peasants' revolt (1358). This revolt was called the Jacquerie (the revolt of Jacques, the commoner) by the contemptuous nobility. It only lasted two weeks but spread over a sixth of the country. It was a spontaneous wave of hatred: embittered by the plunder and heavy taxation to which they had been subjected the peasants threatened to "wipe out all the nobles to a man". They destroyed castles, burnt seigneurial estates to the ground and slew their inmates. The nobles soon recovered from their initial terror and suppressed the uprising. Nevertheless, this uprising was to produce appreciable results: by the end of the fifteenth century serfdom was virtually a thing of the past.

The French people which had suffered from plundering both at the hands of the English and from their own seigneurs rose up

* The representative body which came into being in 1302.

against the foreign invaders. A peasant girl Joan of Arc convinced that God had called her to rescue her country and help the King, led the French army forward to free besieged Orleans and inflicted a number of defeats on the English. She then made ready to free the whole of the country from the English enemy but in the course of a battle she was taken prisoner by the Burgundians, allies of the English, and handed over to the invader. The English resorted to an accusation of communion with the devil in order to sentence Joan to death by burning at the stake (1431). Yet the French people succeeded in liberating the whole of their country by 1453 and quite soon afterwards, in the reign of Louis XI (1461-1483), the final political unification of the country was accomplished.

The Formation of Other European States

The fifteenth century also saw the political unification of a number of other European countries, large and small, made possible by gradual economic consolidation. A strong Spanish kingdom emerged in Western Europe; to the north three Scandinavian kingdoms, Denmark, Norway and Sweden, and to the east a number of Slavonic states—Poland, Bohemia and the Grand Princedom of Muscovy—emerged. The South Slav countries which had taken shape in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (Serbia and Bulgaria) were under Turkish domination from the end of the fifteenth century onwards.

Turkey

From the sixteenth to the eighteenth century Turkey was one of the most powerful states of Europe and instilled terror in all neighbouring peoples. In the fourteenth century the Turks had conquered the Balkan peninsula and in 1453 they took Constantinople and subjugated all the lands of Byzantium. They compelled their subject peoples to pay them large tribute and laid waste whole towns and villages, taking the inhabitants captive and then selling them as slaves. Thus the Turks condemned their subject peoples to poverty, obstructing the natural course of their economic development.

Italian Political Disunity

Interesting exceptions to the general European pattern are provided by two peoples, who not only failed to achieve political unity in the fifteenth century but were not to do so for several hundred years, the Italians and the Germans.

The Italian people were descended from the Romans and the Germanic tribes which seized the Apennine peninsula in the fifth and sixth centuries: the Ostrogoths and in particular the Lombards. Making use of the old Roman trade routes, the Italians revived trade with the East as early as the tenth century and then started to set up a wide trade network with the rest of Europe making large profits from the sale of costly Eastern luxuries (gold, ivory, brocade, perfumes) to the rich nobles of Europe. As a result, a number of large trading cities grew up in Italy, which flourished not only by virtue of their role as a trade link between the Orient and the rest of Europe, but also because of the brisk trade carried on in Italian wares, glass and crystal from Venice, metalwork from Milan, wool and silk from Florence. The competent merchants of these cities soon turned to local industry in search of goods for barter and in doing so furthered its development. It was in fourteenth-century Italy that the first large-scale capitalist enterprises were to appear.

We have already seen how in countries such as England and still more so France, the townspeople, favouring national economic unity, were the kings' most important allies since the latter sought to consolidate their countries as powerful centralised monarchies. It would have seemed natural for Italy, where large trade and industrial centres flourished, to have developed as a unified centralised state before the others. However this was not to be: once again the reason is to be found in the path of economic development followed by a particular country.

Originally, the major Italian cities had risen to prominence as trading centres for the sale of costly Eastern goods to the West. In Italy herself meanwhile, the large peasant population led an impoverished existence and was thus not in any position to buy such wares, which were subsequently purchased by rich nobles from all over Europe. There was great rivalry between the Italian cities in the purchase of these goods in the East and their sale in Europe. They settled accounts on Italian soil: the northern cities ousted the southern cities from the market and almost put a complete stop to their activity. In the course of two whole centuries Venice vied with Genoa for monopoly of trade with the East, while somewhat later Florence was finally to overcome her great rival, Pisa. Any attempt by one city to subjugate another was regarded as a tyrannical adventure. There were no landed nobles in Italy who were in a position to promote the political unity of the country. The only mainland power in the peninsula was the city of Rome which belonged to the Pope, who feared only one thing: that one of the nobles would become too powerful and start giving orders to him. This meant that papal power constituted one of the most important obstacles to political unity

for hundreds of years. Italy was not to achieve unity until the nineteenth century.

Many of the Italian cities were independent republics, whose nobles were petty rulers and whose citizens had not the slightest interest in the political unification of Italy. Quite naturally, as a result of this situation Italy was frequently to fall prey to more closely knit and thus more powerful neighbours. From the tenth century onwards she was exposed to frequent raids by German nobles, who were joined by the French from the thirteenth century onwards. In the sixteenth century Italy fell into the hands of the Spaniards, and then languished under Austrian yoke from the seventeenth to the middle of the nineteenth century.

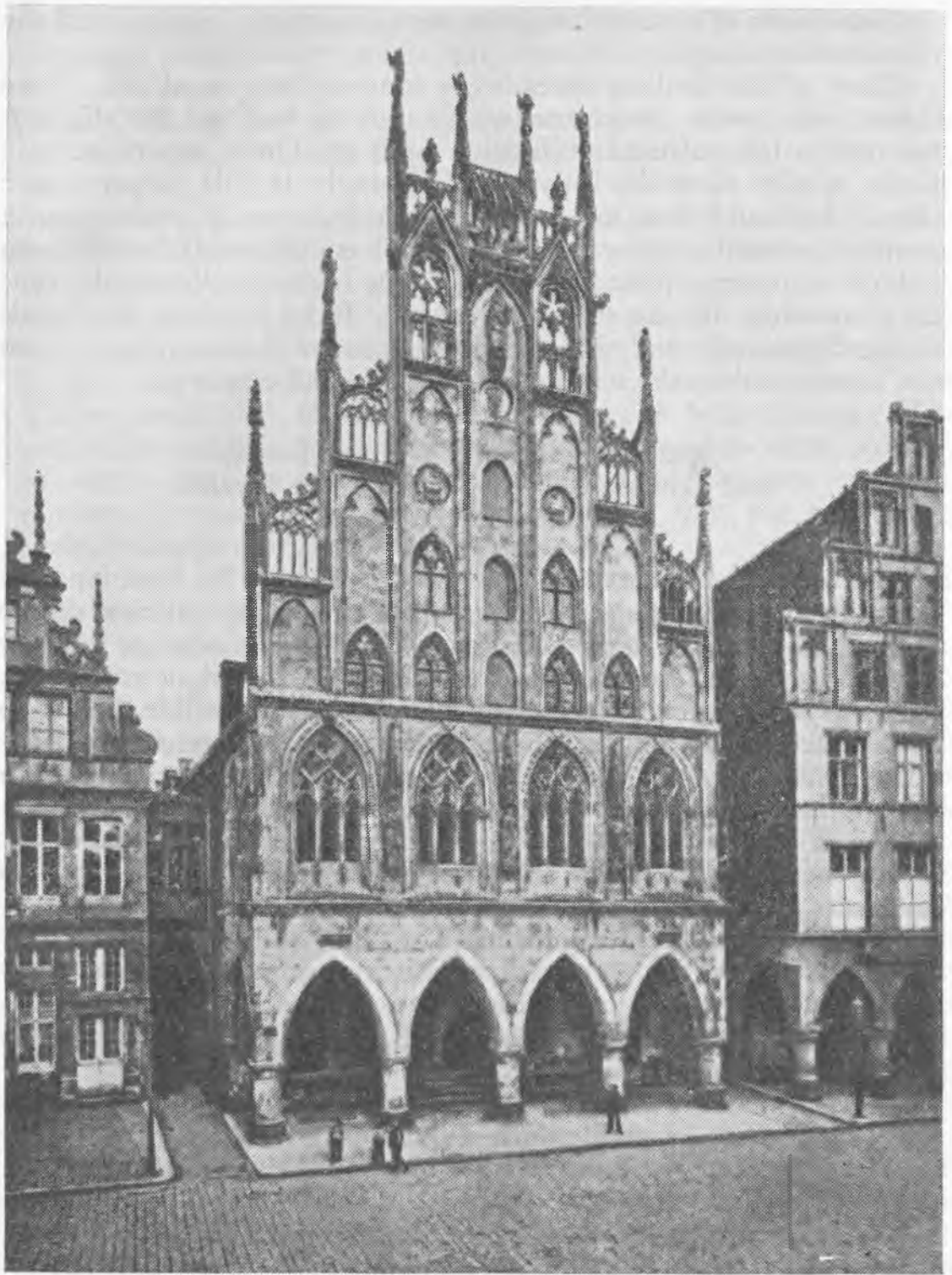
Specific Features of German Social and Economic Development in the Twelfth to Fifteenth Centuries

The lot of the German people was no lighter. In Germany, or the Holy Roman Empire as it was then known, no political centre took shape. Indeed the preconditions for such a process did not exist, although the economy of this backward land demanded it. The very structure of the empire made it impossible for it to become a unified whole. The population was extremely heterogeneous: Germans in the centre, French in the west, Italians in the south, various Slavonic peoples in the south-east and Lithuanians, Finns and Slavs to the north-east. The Germans themselves were divided between myriad princedoms, belonging to temporal and church grandees, united by no common interests but possessing a common aim, that of preventing any future consolidation of the central power. This central power was represented by the Emperor or Kaiser, who, behind the veil of his impressive title and endless claims to be greater than all kings, was in reality weak and powerless vis-à-vis his own vassals.

The German towns, which grew up more slowly than those of the rest of Europe and which were thus weaker, proved ill-equipped to play a role similar to that of the English or French towns. The German cities, in particular the large trading centres in the north and south-west, were, like the Italian cities, stepping stones in international trade routes.

The Hanseatic League

The German towns situated along the coast of the Baltic and on the rivers flowing into it carried on a lively trade with the countries of Western and Eastern Europe. These towns united to form the Hanseatic League. Their fleets brought pelts, fur articles, linen and



The Münster Town Hall. 14th century. Germany

flax seed from East to West, while from the West they brought wares from Flanders such as wool and other textiles. The towns maintained little contact with the rest of the country, their only fear being plundering raids instigated by the German landowners. It was this fear that led them to form the League and set up their own fleet and armies. The centre of the Hanseatic League was the town of Lübeck. The League was represented in every state by major trading centres stretching from London in the West to Novgorod in the East. At the peak of the League's power, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, it was even prepared to contend with a whole country such as Denmark, a conflict from which the League was to emerge the victor. Indeed, the Danish kings could only be elected with the approval of the League.

The large cities of south-west Germany, like those of the north, grew up mainly as trade links between East and West. Later in the fourteenth century they started to trade in wares produced locally. Like the northern towns, they were not in close contact with the economic life of the rest of the country and tried to preserve their liberty and independence of the local princes and nobles. In their struggle against the latter they also joined together in leagues, since they could count on no help from the emperor and the central power.

In no other country did the dominance and reckless liberties of the landed nobility gather such momentum as in Germany during the period from the eleventh to the fifteenth century. The constantly weakening central power was compelled to adopt policies in the interests of these "noble" robbers and organise aggressive expeditions to foreign countries so as to satisfy their hunger for plunder and loot.

The Italian Wars

From the tenth century onwards the German kings made frequent raids into Italy, which was far richer than their own lands, in order to force the Pope to confer on them the title and crown of Holy Roman Emperor. Systematic plundering of Italy brought revenue to the nobles' coffers and made them more powerful opponents of the imperial power. When, from the twelfth century onwards, the cities of northern Italy grew stronger and were able to put up effective resistance, the German knights started to turn their attention eastwards.

Der Drang nach Osten

The religious Order of the Teutonic Knights seized the lands of the Prussian tribes in Lithuania and almost wiped out the local population to a man; those that were left were taken into captivity

as slaves and then the army moved on eastwards and subjugated the population of the Eastern Baltic countries, Latvia and Estonia. Their aggression was masked under the banner of propagating Christianity to the heathen (although the majority of those who fell captive to these plunderers were already adherents of the Christian faith) and they were distinguished for their unprecedented cruelty. Contemporary historians wrote of the laying waste of whole villages, the burning of crops and endless slaughter of adults, old people and children.

There is no doubt that these bearers of "true Christian culture", as they called themselves, would have moved further East and penetrated deep into Russia if they had not been halted in their tracks by Alexander Nevsky, suffering a crushing defeat at his hands on the ice of Lake Chudskoye (Lake Peipus) on April 5th, 1242. Two hundred years later, in 1410, the Poles and Lithuanians together with Russian forces from the Smolensk principedom incurred yet another defeat on the Teutonic Knights at Grünwald (in East Prussia) after which the Order ceased to exist as an independent Church power.

However, the consequences of this marauding were disastrous for Germany. The systematic plunder of Italy and the ascendant power of the nobles in the East, in territory that was later to be known as East Prussia, undermined the power of the emperor and the central government still further. This continual aggression against neighbouring powers ruled out any hopes of political unity for Germany. Imperial power was soon to be nothing more than a symbol bereft of any real significance. Meanwhile the power of the individual nobles, the princes, waxed and they even tried to have their independence of the emperor legally ratified. In 1356 Charles IV's Golden Bull recognised the political independence of the more powerful princes, their right to elect the emperor, and accorded them various privileges. Alliances between cities were forbidden, while wars between individual princes were not. Germany literally disintegrated into a host of petty principdoms and its nobles, brought up on century-old traditions of plunder and violent treatment of all alien peoples, were to sow the seeds of the subsequent Junker spirit and its particularly abhorrent manifestation, that of Prussian militarism.

Bohemia from the Eleventh to the Fifteenth Century. The Hussite Wars

The Holy Roman Empire included not only a large number of German states but also the state of Bohemia. As early as the eleventh century German emperors granted the Bohemian princes a royal title and gradually Bohemia became a virtually inde-

pendent country. It was the richest land in the empire, where industry and trade developed rapidly, many valuable minerals were mined and towns flourished. However, the towns did not yet play any important political role since it was the prelates and nobles who had the decisive voice in the Bohemian Diet. German influence made itself strongly felt throughout the country. Bohemia was little more than a German colony. After adopting the Christian religion, brought to those parts by the Germans, Bohemia placed large tracts of virgin land at the disposal of German monasteries, where German peasants were then settled. Bohemia was inundated with German monks, representatives of religious and chivalrous orders. The Germans—rich landowners, members of the clergy, mine-owners, town councillors—were mostly members of the ruling class. The zenith of Bohemia's political sway was attained in the reign of Charles IV, who virtually made it the centre of his empire.

By the end of the fourteenth century conflicting interests in Bohemia had reached the point of no return. The Czech burghers, knights and lesser nobles resisted the dominance of the German prelates and landowners. The main bastion of revolutionary opposition was the Czech peasantry which sought to free itself from feudal exploitation and the dominance of the Catholic Church. Thus social and national issues were interwoven and were soon to find expression in a religious movement. The large-scale revolutionary movement in fifteenth-century Bohemia was to go down in history as the Hussite Wars. They are named after a professor of Prague University, Jan Hus (1371-1415) who defied the papacy, demanded Church reforms and exposed the corruption of the Catholic clergy. In 1415, he was summoned to the Council of Constance (a Church Council). His imperial safe conduct, granted him by the Emperor Sigismund, was violated and he was burnt at the stake. Hus' death was the signal for the outbreak of an uprising in Bohemia. The fiercest battles were those fought out in the south of the country, where there were mass uprisings. The centre of the radical wing of the Hussites was the city of Tabor. From 1419 to 1437 the revolutionary army of the Taborites resisted the imperial army and even gained a number of victories. However, a split within the Hussite movement led to the insurgents' eventual defeat.

Nevertheless, the Hussite Wars were to be of immense significance in the history of the Czech people. They dealt a heavy blow to the papacy and the Catholic Church, anticipating the European Reformation. These wars also served to hasten the emergence of a Czech national consciousness and the development of Czech national culture.

Summary of the Development of Feudal Society Between the Twelfth and Fifteenth Centuries

This second stage of the Middle Ages ushered in extremely important changes, paving the way for the transition to new production relations in both agriculture and industry.

The mining and fashioning of iron, which in the early Middle Ages had been more costly than gold, had by this time developed on a much wider scale: iron had become so much cheaper that iron ploughshares, hoe blades, harrow teeth, scythes, sickles and other agricultural implements had universally replaced wooden implements on peasant holdings. In the latter half of the twelfth century new lands were put to arable farming after being cleared of woods, which had once covered large expanses of Germany, Northern France and England. By this time manuring techniques had also improved, which significantly increased grain harvests. As more and more towns grew up and urban population expanded, so market-gardening and fruit orchards came to play an important role in agriculture. Although in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, as a result of the Black Death (1348-1351) and major wars, there was a marked fall in the population of Europe and the shortage of labour was so serious that it even caused a crisis in agriculture (reflected in the fact that many of the lands newly cultivated in the thirteenth century were abandoned and as a result the supply of food was considerably reduced), this state of affairs was only temporary and by the second half of the fifteenth century further advances in agriculture were already to be observed. Industry advanced even more.

Chapter Six

THE STRUGGLE OF THE PEOPLES OF EASTERN AND CENTRAL EUROPE, CHINA, CENTRAL ASIA AND TRANSCAUCASIA AGAINST FOREIGN INVASION IN THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

Mongol Society at the Beginning of the Thirteenth Century. The Formation of the Mongol State

At the beginning of the thirteenth century a powerful Mongol state grew up in Asia. This was a turbulent period, which saw the Mongol hordes embarking on enormous military campaigns, bringing untold suffering and devastation to the peoples they conquered.

The Mongols came from the steppe-lands north of China. The majority of the Mongol tribes were nomadic pastoralists. Initially theirs had been a primitive clan society, but by the twelfth century the clan patterns had weakened and chieftains or khans had seized power and concentrated wealth in their hands. These khans rallied to their service the lesser nobles and poor peasants. The wealth of the khans and their vassals was gleaned from the work of the simple peasants, who were obliged to give their masters their best livestock for slaughter and their best dairy cattle, take their masters' herds out to pasture and endure long periods of military service.

At the beginning of the thirteenth century a Mongol state of an early feudal type began to take shape. An important role in this new state was played by the *nukut*—armed retainers in the service of the khans, who later became their vassals. The nobles strengthened their power with the support of the *nukut*. At the beginning of the thirteenth century the khans all rallied to the support of Temujin (c. 1155-1227), leader of the Mongols of the steppe-lands who in 1206 was elected tribal leader or Great Khan and adopted the name Jenghis Khan.

Jenghis Khan united the whole of Mongolia under his power and mustered an enormous army. Every Mongol was an accomplished equestrian warrior and within a short space of time a cavalry army of unprecedented size had been mustered. The army consisted of groups numbering ten thousand men, divided into units

of a thousand, each composed of ten sub-units of a hundred. The Mongol soldiers were almost invulnerable to arrows of their enemies, armed as they were with helmets and armour made of hard leather, bows and arrows and sharp sabres and all astride their fleet-footed horses. Their military strategy was also of an extremely high standard. After conquering northern China Jenghis Khan was able to consolidate his domain considerably. Chinese engineers instructed the Mongol troops in siege tactics and the use of battering-rams and experienced Chinese administrative officials reorganised the state bureaucratic apparatus. Later the Mongols were to conquer southern China as well. Special missile weapons were used for throwing heavy stones and pots of burning oil over town walls. The Mongol army constituted a formidable threat to the rest of the world, being well-armed, extremely mobile and united under a single leader.

Jenghis Khan soon conquered the peoples of Siberia, such as the Buryats living on the shores of Lake Baikal, the Yakuts and the Oiots in the Altai foothills. After these annexations Jenghis Khan led his army on to conquer Central Asia and Transcaucasia.

Jenghis Khan's Conquests in Central Asia and Transcaucasia

In Central Asia Jenghis Khan was to find himself face to face with rich cities and peoples of an ancient civilisation. These lands had been settled since time immemorial. The local population lived mainly in the fertile valleys and their main occupations were agriculture, stockbreeding and fruit and vegetable growing. The farmers of Central Asia had long since mastered effective irrigation techniques which they made use of to extend their lands under cultivation. They had also built rich cities, where the arts and crafts had taken deep root, such as Samarkand and Merv. The masons and architects of this part of the world were famous for their skill.

When Central Asia found itself threatened by invasion from the Mongolian Tartars its peoples were already living in a society with well-established feudal patterns. Local chieftains were virtually independent and there was no strong central power in the area. This made it much easier for Jenghis Khan to conquer these lands.

Jenghis Khan's host thrust through this area into the state of Khorezm, seizing towns and villages, plundering, wiping out the local population and taking men and women into captivity as slaves. The peoples of Central Asia put up a bold resistance to the invaders. There were strong garrisons in every town and in

Samarkand there were even 20 war elephants. However the gates of this city, like those of many others, were opened to Jenghis Khan by traitors. In Samarkand Jenghis Khan took about thirty thousand craftsmen prisoner and distributed them among his retinue as slaves. He employed similar tactics in other cities as well. The rich city of Merv and many others were seized and ravaged.

The lack of unity among the local nobles facilitated the Mongol conquest considerably, since it weakened resistance to the invaders.

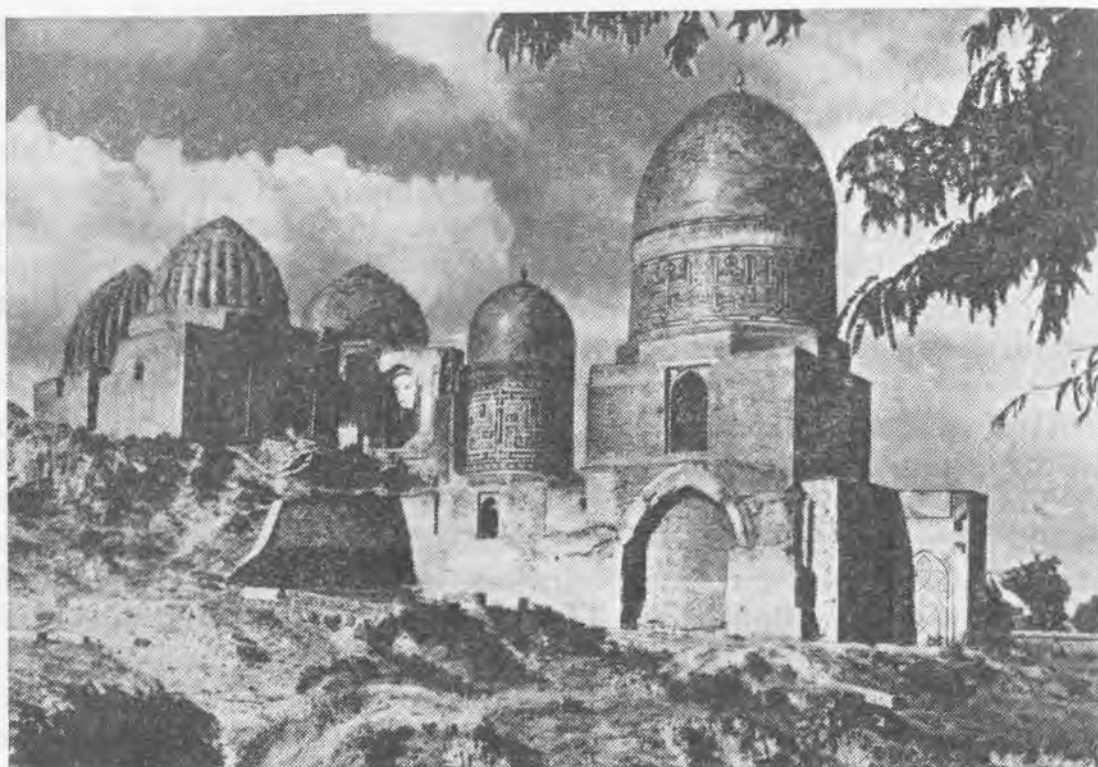
After annexing Central Asia at the beginning of the thirteenth century, Jenghis Khan led his army on to Georgia. The peoples of Transcaucasia put up a long struggle for their freedom, but finally their resistance too was broken. Mongolia subjugated the peoples of Armenia and Georgia, whose culture was more advanced than that of their conquerors. The Mongols captured and enslaved skilled Georgian and Armenian craftsmen, artisans and scholars. The Mongolian yoke dealt a heavy blow at the culture of the peoples of Transcaucasia. Many cities were destroyed and the Georgians and Armenians were compelled to pay their new masters crippling tribute. The Mongols as well as demanding a tenth part of each man's property also gathered an additional tax from each farm: 3 bushels of corn, 12 gallons of wine, 10 pounds of rice, three sacks, two cords, a silver coin and a horse-shoe. Those who were unable to pay were condemned to slavery.

Once they had firmly established their rule in Transcaucasia the Mongol khans entrusted the collection of taxes to the local princes who were to bring the tribute to their Mongolian overlords. Mongolian rule in Transcaucasia was to last for almost two hundred years, up till the end of the fourteenth century.

The Mongolian Invasion of Russian Territory

The conquest of Central Asia and Transcaucasia by the Mongol army brought it to the doorstep of Rus. Jenghis Khan's forces crossed the Caucasus mountains and made their way into the steppes of southern Russia. Here they were confronted by the Polovtsi nomads who turned to the Russian princes for help. "Today they will massacre us and tomorrow it will be your turn if you do not come to our aid," were the words of their envoys. The princes decided to join forces against Jenghis Khan and set out to meet him in battle in Polovtsi territory.

The battle took place in May 1223 on the river Kalka, a small river which flows into the Azov Sea not far from the mouth of the Don. The Russian forces were routed. The Mongol khans



The tomb of Shah-Zindeh in Samarkand—fourteenth-fifteenth centuries

covered the bodies of the wounded and prisoners with boards, sat down on them and held a great feast to celebrate their victory. This was the first appearance of the Mongols (or Tartars as the Russians called them) in Russia. This time they did not go on to consolidate their victory, but instead withdrew into Asia and nothing was heard of them for twelve years.

When Jenghis Khan died he was succeeded by his son Ogdai, who sent his nephew Khan Batu (d. 1255) to conquer Europe. The threat of destruction and enslavement hung over the whole of Europe.

At that time there was no united Russian state. The majority of the Russian princedoms were small and weaker than the princedom of Vladimir or Novgorod. Feudal disintegration in Rus undermined the chances of effective resistance to outside enemies. Rus fell a prey to this terrible foe because she was disunited and her armies lacked cohesion.

In 1236 Batu's horde crossed the steppe-lands bordering on the Caspian, invaded the kingdom of the Volga Bulgars and captured their capital city, Bulgar. From there they advanced on Rus. In the winter of the following year (1237) Batu crossed the Volga with his enormous army and marched on the princedom of Ryazan. After bitter fighting Ryazan surrendered and was burnt to the ground. A similar fate was suffered by other princedoms who

preferred to "wait and see" rather than join with their neighbours to face the common foe. Thus Vladimir and other towns of the principedom of Suzdal fell to the enemy.

Moscow was also burnt down by the Mongol hordes. Prince Yuri Vsevolodovich (1187-1238) went out to face the enemy with all his soldiers and a mass of peasants on the banks of the river Sit but it was too late. The Russians lost this battle too and their prince was slain on the field.

Gradually Batu became master of the whole of the Dnieper valley. In 1240 his hordes marched on Kiev and laid siege to the city. Batu was so impressed by the beauty of this city, the silhouette of its fine buildings and the golden domes of its churches shining in the sun, that he decided to take it without destroying it and proposed to the men of Kiev that they surrender without a fight. They refused, preferring to fight to the death, and during the subsequent siege almost the whole of the city was burnt down and destroyed.

The War of the Russian and Baltic Peoples Against the German and Swedish Invaders

One disaster was to be followed by another. While Batu was marching on the scattered Russian principedoms from the East another mighty enemy appeared in the north-west and marched on Novgorod. German knights began to advance towards Russia, eager to seize new lands and peasants to work them. They enslaved the Baltic peoples and seized their land. In Livonia, at the mouth of the Dvina they built the fortress of Riga, which was to become the main stronghold of the cruel oppressors, the Order of the Brothers of the Sword.

Another alliance of knights, the Order of the Teutonic Knights, started to threaten the Lithuanians from the West. Soon the Teutonic Knights joined forces with the Brothers of the Sword and together they turned on Pskov and Novgorod.

Taking note of this state of affairs aggressive factions among the landed nobles of Sweden were also stirred to action. They were overjoyed to hear of the Mongol invasion, thinking that now that Rus was being overrun from the East by the Tartars they could march in from the North and gain more land while the country was in such a vulnerable position.

In 1240 the Swedish ruler Jarl Birger landed on the banks of the Neva with his troops. The Russian army rallied on St. Sophia Square in Novgorod and the Prince's soldiers were joined by part of the city guard. Prince Alexander Yaroslavich (1220-1263) led the Novgorod army out to meet Birger's forces. The two armies

met at the Neva: the Russians took the Swedes by surprise and wholesale slaughter ensued. In the course of the battle Prince Alexander came face to face with Birger and "made a mark on his face with his sharp spear". The young warrior Savva made his way to Birger's goldroofed tent and cut down its pole: the tent collapsed before the assembled armies and the Russians rejoiced. The fierce battle on the river Neva ended in a Russian victory, in honour of which Prince Alexander was hailed from then on as Alexander Nevsky.

Meanwhile the German knights were not sitting idle. They marched on Rus with an enormous army. In April 1242 the famous battle on the ice of Lake Chudskoye (Lake Peipus) took place, to go down in history as the "Slaughter on the Ice". The Germans deployed their forces in a narrow wedge formation so as to pierce the Russian line of attack and cut their army in two. At the head of the German army heavily-armoured cavalry advanced; behind them came infantry with spears and swords flanked by cavalry.

Alexander Nevsky saw through the enemy's plan, and concentrated his main forces not in the centre but on the flanks. He lured the enemy on to attack his army in the centre and then closed in on them from the flanks with his main forces. A massacre ensued and the ice was soon red with blood. The German knights were routed, the few survivors being taken prisoner.

These victories under Alexander Nevsky were of great significance and kept north-west Rus intact, saving it from enslavement by the German and Swedish barons.

Rus Under the Tartar Yoke

While Rus succeeded in beating off her enemies in the north-west she was less fortunate against the Mongol invasion under Batu. Much of the country was to suffer under the Tartar scourge, and even Novgorod, although the Tartars did not advance that far, was obliged to pay them tribute.

Rus was now under the yoke of the Tartar khans, which was to last for more than two hundred years—from the middle of the thirteenth century to the end of the fifteenth. The state founded by Khan Batu was called the Golden Horde. Batu set up his capital in the town of Sarai on the Volga (not far from present-day Astrakhan). Later the capital was moved further up the Volga (to a site not far from present-day Volgograd). The new capital was called Novy (New) Sarai. The state of the Golden Horde incorporated part of Central Asia and Kazakhstan, the Volga valley, the Crimea, the Dnieper valley and the whole of north-east Rus.

The Tartar conquerors demanded exorbitant tribute from the Russian people, a tenth part of all their property. In addition they also demanded tribute in the form of grain, livestock and money. All this was collected by the khan's *baskaks* or tribute collectors. Those who were unable to pay or who refused were taken as slaves.

*"He who has no money, loses his child,
He who has no child, loses his wife,
He who has no wife, loses his head,"*

sang the Russians in a song about their alien masters.

The slightest resistance to their rule the Tartars answered with wholesale plunder and slaughter. The Tartar yoke meant much cruel suffering and bloodshed.

The Russian princes lost their independence and were made subject to the Tartar khan. They were compelled to ride to pay homage to the khan at the capital of the Golden Horde bringing him costly gifts, in order to receive from him a patent or *yarlyk* confirming them in office. The khan himself nominated the Grand Prince. Once independent Rus was now a dominion of the Golden Horde. Tartar rule hindered the cultural, social and political development of Rus, turning it into a backward country.

The Mongols undertook a number of expeditions further west, invading Poland, Hungary and even penetrating as far as Venice. However, Rus' struggle against the Tartar-Mongol yoke, which spent the energies and resources of the conquerors, saved Western Europe from a similar fate.

Chapter Seven

THE EMERGENCE OF A UNITED RUSSIAN STATE

The Restoration of the Economy After the Mongol Devastation. The Rise of Muscovy

The Mongol invasion wrought untold havoc with the economy of the Russian lands. Many towns and villages had been burnt down and destroyed. Thousands of farmers were killed or taken away into captivity and countless Russian families were deprived of their breadwinners. Skilled craftsmen had been led away to the Golden Horde and the apprenticeship of their would-be successors was interrupted: this all led to a steep decline in the arts and crafts. The tribute for the Tartars bled the land dry, especially since the fear of slavery hung over the heads of those who could not pay. In short, Mongol rule seriously held up Russian economic development.

Gradually patterns of everyday life became more normal, particularly once the princes themselves were made responsible for the collection of tribute. The khan's *baskaks* now received the tribute from the princes and themselves appeared less frequently in the towns and villages.

It was of course feudal patterns of agriculture which reasserted themselves. As before, the princes and the boyars owned the land and the large mass of the peasants were dependent on their masters. Gradually the three-field system was reintroduced, and stockbreeding started to develop. Ironsmiths, blacksmiths, tanners and potters returned to their work.

Just as before, the peasants who worked their masters' land paid them quit-rent partly in kind—grain, oats, livestock, poultry—and partly in money, and also carried out labour services. By the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the majority of the peasants were working on a quit-rent basis. The monasteries which had recently become landowning institutions played an increasingly important role. A new form of agricultural unit appeared—the *sloboda*: princes made tracts of hitherto uncultivated land exempt from taxes and labour service for a set period and invited new hands to come and work them.

A new form of landownership also emerged: princes gave the men in their service plots of land which were in their possession for as long as they worked for them. The temporary owners of these plots, or *pomeshchiki*, were also obliged to rally to the prince's banner with a detachment of properly armed cavalry and foot soldiers in times of war; when they left the prince's service, the prince would then give the land to someone else in his service. Thus, there developed a class of loyal servants of central power, the *pomeshchiki*. These economic developments were vital factors contributing to the formation of a united Russian state.

Gradually Moscow started to rise up again out of its ashes and ruins. It gradually became a more prosperous city and the power of its princes grew. The area around Moscow possessed all the important conditions necessary for agricultural and industrial development. These lands were a traditional centre for arable farming. The local inhabitants were experienced cultivators, iron-smiths, potters, masons and tanners. Moscow was also favourably situated from the point of view of defence: the Tartar cavalry had found it difficult to reach the city, surrounded as it was by thick woods. The neighbouring princedoms—those of Ryazan and Nizhny Novgorod—acted as buffers against its enemies. This led peasants from many districts to come and settle in Muscovy.

Moscow was situated at the junction of important trade routes linking the West and the Volga valley. The merchants of Novgorod travelled via the Moskva river to the Oka and on to the Volga to trade with the Golden Horde. Another trade route led southwards via the Don and the Sea of Azov to the Black Sea. By this time Italian merchants from the rich town of Genoa had already come to settle in the Crimea. The tolls from the merchant vessels which used these waterways went to the princes of Muscovy and brought them considerable wealth. Muscovy occupied a central position among the various Russian princedoms and soon became the nucleus of the Russian lands. During the reign of Yuri Dolgoruky it was still part of the domain of the prince of Vladimir. It did not become independent until the thirteenth century.

The first prince of independent Muscovy was the son of Alexander Nevsky, Prince Daniil Alexandrovich (1261-1303). He extended the princedom by wresting the town of Kolomna from the princes of Ryazan. His son then won the town of Mozhaisk from the princes of Smolensk. Kolomna lay at the confluence of the rivers Moskva and Oka and Mozhaisk on the upper reaches of the Moskva. Thus by the early fourteenth century the princes of Muscovy had become the virtual masters of the whole of the Moskva basin.

Soon afterwards Ivan I (who reigned till 1340) became Prince of Muscovy. Known as Ivan Kalita (Moneybags), he was renowned

for his avarice and amassed great riches. He expanded his domains at the expense of the minor princes in the neighbouring lands, and succeeded in coming to terms with the rulers of the Golden Horde, paying them frequent visits and bringing gifts to them and their wives. The latter soon came to know that whenever Ivan Kalita came to their part of the world that meant that there would be a great deal of gold and silver to be had. At this time the Tartar attacks on Russian lands were much less frequent than before. The people were able to reap their crops and ply their trades in peace.

Alexander, Prince of Tver (1301-1339), was appointed Grand Prince of Rus by the Tartar khans. In 1327 the Tartar envoy Cholkhan came to Tver to collect tribute. An uprising took place and Cholkhan was slain. The khan then sent troops from the Golden Horde to punish the insubordinate men of Tver and put Ivan in charge of the expedition. Tver was sacked and razed and Ivan became the next Grand Prince (1328). During Ivan's reign the power of Muscovy increased considerably and Moscow became a flourishing, beautiful city.

Uprisings Against the Rule of the Golden Horde. The Battle of Kulikovo Field (1380)

On more than one occasion uprisings against the Mongol conquerors broke out in Russian lands.

In the winter of 1259 the Tartar tax-collectors came to Novgorod to register the city's population for the purposes of collecting tribute. The working people of Novgorod protested at this, refused to let the khan's envoys into the city, and slew them. The resistance of the people of Novgorod proved extremely hard to quell. In 1262 uprisings against the Tartars broke out in many cities. The bells rang out and the people assembled in the central squares of the cities of Vladimir, Suzdal, Rostov, Pereyaslavl and Yaroslavl; they drove their oppressors from their gates. Those who complied with the Tartar demands were killed. The Tartars meted out cruel punishment to the insurgent cities. However, Alexander Nevsky paid a special visit to the Golden Horde and succeeded in saving the cities from destruction by placating the khan with rich gifts.

In 1289 the people of Rostov drove the Tartar oppressors out of the city and seized the money and valuables which they had collected. In the second half of the thirteenth century the working people of the Kursk principedom turned the tax-collector out of their town and sacked the local Tartar settlement.

In the fourteenth century Muscovy rose to new prominence while the Golden Horde grew appreciably weaker. In the middle



Late 14th-century miniature of the Battle of Kulikovo

of the century the throne changed hands fourteen times in twenty years in the Golden Horde, since many of the khans were slain by ambitious rivals.

In the second half of the fourteenth century the Tartar commander Mamai (d. 1380) succeeded in rallying all the Tartars behind him, at a time when Muscovy had already ceased to submit meekly to all commands from the khan. Mamai decided that a confrontation was required to bring his unruly subjects to heel:

he mustered an enormous army and concluded a military alliance with Lithuania.

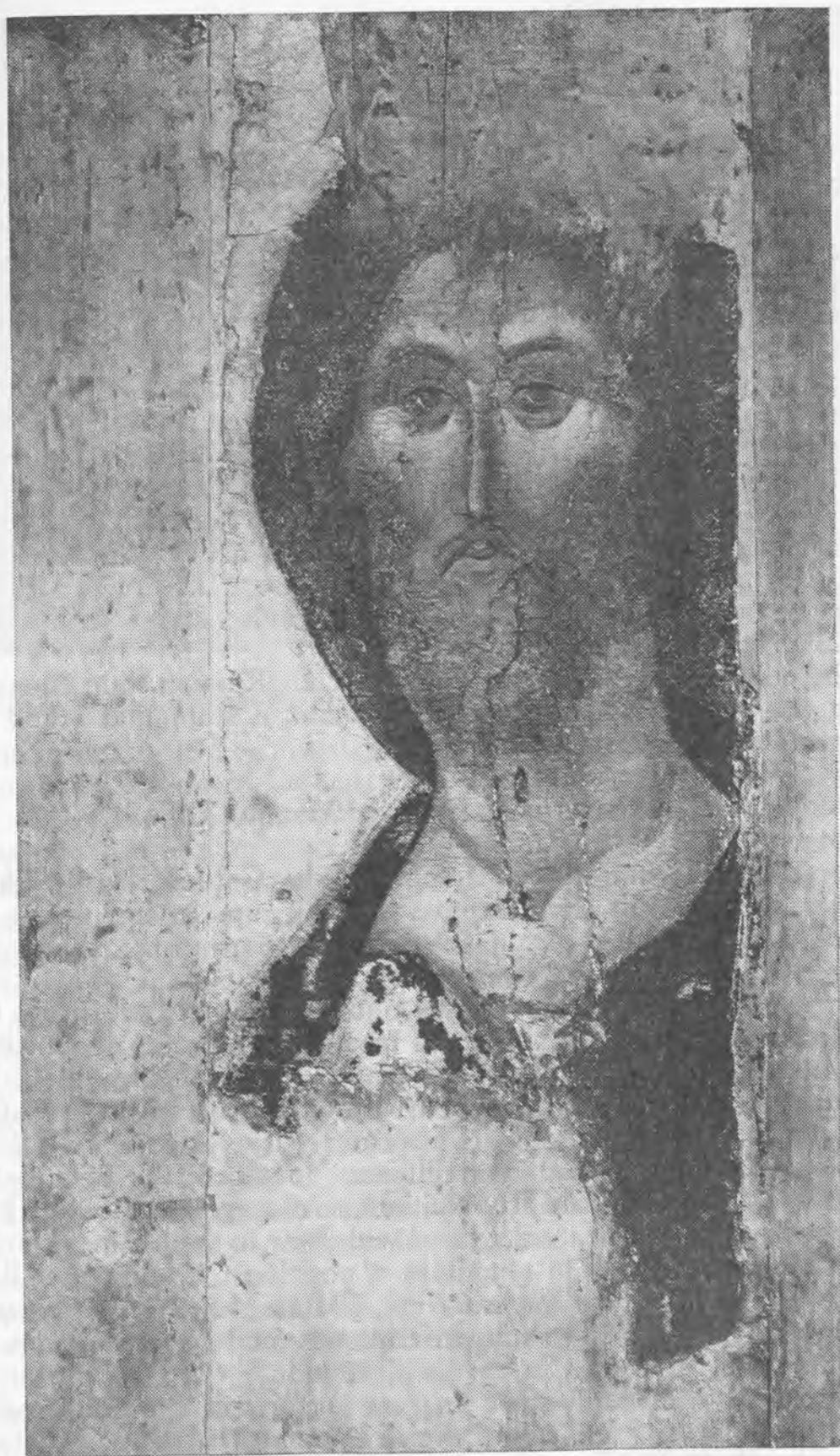
In August 1380 Mamai began to advance towards Moscow.

Ivan I's grandson, Dmitry Ivanovich, Prince of Muscovy (1350-1389), rallied an army. In face of this terrible enemy many of the Russian princes chose to forget their private feuds and the armies of the Rostov, Yaroslavl, and Byelozersk princes joined forces. The decisive factor in this situation was that the common people of Rus took up arms against the Tartars: from all corners of the land came peasants and craftsmen armed with boar-spears, cudgels and axes. The Russian army numbered 150,000. They marched to the Don, crossed it and then deployed their forces on the Kulikovo Field at the mouth of the small river Nepryadva, a tributary of the Don. The battlefield encompassed an area of four square miles and the fighting was fierce and bloody. The Russian resistance was weakening when suddenly Russian reserves emerged from ambush and hurled themselves against the Tartars. Mamai's army was routed. The few survivors of his host fled from the battlefield. Prince Dmitry was given the title of Dmitry Donskoi in honour of this victory, the first major Russian victory against the Tartar khans. It demonstrated to the princes that their strength lay in unity. The Battle of Kulikovo Field did not do away with the Tartar yoke once and for all, but it considerably weakened their rule, and inspired new hopes in the Russian people.

The First Steps Towards the Unification of a Russian State

The rulers of Muscovy continued to extend their domains. They annexed the lands of the rich Nizhny Novgorod principedom. Nizhny Novgorod (present-day Gorky) had grown up on the banks of the Volga: the town was a Russian frontier post and an important trade centre, visited by many Eastern merchants. Particular success in the unification of the Russian lands under Muscovy was achieved in the reign of Ivan III (1462-1505) who was to become ruler of a united Rus. In 1478 Ivan incorporated the independent and heroic city of Novgorod into the principedom of Muscovy. Ivan III also captured many of Novgorod's former possessions including the town of Vologda. The lands of the Komi people on the river Vychegda were also annexed to Muscovy.

The most important factor facilitating the unification of the Russian state was the renewed energy and diligence of the working people. This enabled Rus to recover from the devastation wrought by the Tartars, raise up towns and villages out of ruins and ashes, cultivate abandoned fields and virgin land and re-establish trades and crafts which had fallen into decline. This industry and application laid the foundation for resistance to the



"The Saviour". Early 15th-century icon by Andrei Rublev

foreign rulers. By renewing and enhancing the country's economy the people furthered the unification of the patchwork of petty feudal states.

Ivan III bound many lands to Muscovy either by means of treaties or force of arms. Many of the petty princes were well aware of Ivan's power and preferred to profess their allegiance to him rather than be conquered. Thus, the princes of Yaroslavl acknowledged Ivan as their liege-lord and handed their possessions over to him. When Ivan's troops approached Tver many of the petty princes in that part of Rus came over to Ivan one after the other with the request to be admitted to his service. The federation of the powerful principedom of Tver and Muscovy was an important event since earlier Tver had been Moscow's main rival for domination of the Russian lands.

The nobles of Lithuania also took note of these events in Rus and some of them joined the service of Ivan III, which meant that their extensive estates also became part of the Russian state, lands that had once been part of Kiev Rus. In Ivan III's reign fighting over these lands broke out between Lithuania and Rus, but Rus retained her hold over them.

The power of Rus grew steadily. A strong Russian state emerged from the patchwork of petty principedoms, a state that could no longer tolerate the Mongol yoke.

Final Liberation from the Mongol Yoke

At the end of the fifteenth century the Golden Horde grew weaker and weaker and started to break up. In the reign of Ivan III Rus no longer paid tribute or homage to the khans. No further tribute was paid to the Tartars after 1476.

The Tartar Khan Ahmed made a final attempt to subjugate the Russians again. In 1480, he led his troops to the banks of the river Oka at its confluence with the Ugra. However, he failed in his attempt to cross the river, being driven back by the Russians after four days of heavy fighting. The Tartar army stood for a long time on the bank of the river reluctant to attack the formidable Muscovite army of Ivan III. Neither side opened battle. In November Khan Ahmed retreated and withdrew to the Golden Horde, realising that he was no longer in a position to subjugate Rus. This was the last sally made by the Tartars to demand tribute. Mongol rule over Rus was at an end; the country finally won its independence in 1480.

Meanwhile Moscow became an ever larger and more impressive city, reflecting the grandeur of the new united realm. A new stone palace was built in Moscow and thick stone walls were built round the fortress of Kremlin. Ivan III summoned the celebrated Italian



The Uspensky Cathedral in the Moscow Kremlin (1476-1479)

architect Aristotle Fieravanti to his court to supervise the building of the five-domed Cathedral of the Dormition (Uspensky Sobor) within the Kremlin walls. Towers were built along the walls of the new Kremlin and Fieravanti's pupils built the famous Rusticated Palace (Granovitaya Palata) for ceremonial receptions in honour of foreign envoys, so named because the main façade is faced with rusticated stone blocks. Many talented Russian craftsmen from various parts of the realm were working in Moscow at that time making of it a noble capital city.

The Roman Emperors had the tradition of adding to their name the title Caesar. Ivan III decided to do likewise, and adopted the title of Tsar (the Russian derivation of Caesar). Ivan also adopted the coat of arms of the Byzantine Empire, the double eagle, which was to remain the coat of arms of the Russian Empire under the tsars right up until the February revolution of 1917.

A large number of ambassadors from foreign lands visited the courts of Ivan III and Vassily III (1479-1533), from the German Empire, the Kingdom of Hungary, Denmark, Venice and Turkey. A new tradition of ceremonial receptions grew up.

The first of the princes of Muscovy to call himself Tsar was Ivan III but his grandson Ivan the Terrible (1530-1584) was the first to have himself crowned in the Uspensky Cathedral with due pomp and circumstance, and declare himself "Tsar of All the Russias".

Chapter Eight
**THE EMERGENCE
OF EARLY CAPITALISM IN WESTERN EUROPE**

This chapter will discuss the third stage of the Middle Ages, when within the fabric of feudal production relations there appeared elements of a new, capitalist mode of production. This process stemmed from the advancement of production techniques and organisation.

The growth of iron-mining was an extremely important factor in this process, since iron was the most important metal for both agriculture and industry. The first blast furnaces came into use in which pig iron was obtained and then made into steel and iron. More precious metals, copper, tin and lead were mined and there were important innovations in mining techniques. People learnt to use deep shafts and invented devices for pumping water out and air in. Water-powered machines and water-wheels were invented.

Important advances were also made in transport. With the help of the compass long sea voyages far from land were now undertaken; new sails were introduced which made it possible to tack against the wind. All these new discoveries and inventions paved the way for the great geographical discoveries of the period from the end of the fifteenth to the end of the seventeenth century.

Great Geographical Discoveries

It was at this period that the Europeans discovered many new countries and opened up new, hitherto unknown routes to distant corners of the globe. In 1492 a Genoese mariner in the service of the Spanish crown, Christopher Columbus, discovered America, which was later named after another Genoese explorer, Amerigo

Vespucci, who was to chart the new continent. In 1497-1498 Vasco da Gama from Portugal reached India by way of the Cape of Good Hope.

In 1519 the Portuguese explorer Magellan completed his first journey round the world at the order of the Spanish King. Setting out westwards from Spain he eventually discovered the strait separating the South American mainland from Tierra del Fuego (the strait of Magellan), and sailed on across the Pacific Ocean to the Philippine Islands. Here he was killed in a skirmish with the natives but his companions continued the voyage under the command of del Cano and in September 1522 they reached Spain, having lost most of their crew (218 out of 234) as a result of hunger and disease. In the seventeenth century Australia was discovered by the Dutch.

The Emergence of the Capitalist Mode of Production

Various innovations in production techniques raised the level of labour productivity. However, the small-scale production typical of the Middle Ages was ill-adapted to promote the perfection of the implements of labour: the organised patterns of mediaeval industry were not arranged in such a way as to encourage inventions and improvements. The mediaeval guilds went out of their way to obstruct improvement in techniques or labour organisation, fearing that this might lead to some growing richer than their fellows. Meanwhile the need to expand production made itself felt more and more keenly. This was particularly true of industries such as the textile industry, which had long been organised to supply a large home and foreign market. This applied to silk and wool production in Florence and the cloth industry of Gent, Bruges and Ypres. It was here that the first features of the transition to capitalism were to appear.

New features paving the way for major changes in the future gradually emerged in the guild system. Higher labour productivity and the considerable increase in the volume of production in various industries led to a division of the production process into a number of separate operations or processes, each carried out by a separate guild. Thus in the Florentine textile industry, weavers', spinners' and dyers' guilds were set up—this being an example of what is known as the division of labour between separate guilds.

Other changes were also taking place. Merchants disposing of sufficient means would often buy up wholesale produce from one or more guilds and then take it upon themselves to sell it and organise the necessary transportation to the place of sale and

consumption. They then gradually started to take into their own hands the supply of raw materials and later that of implements of labour, while the guild members became increasingly dependent on such merchants. Since the charters of the mediaeval guilds laid down definite limits for the progression of such dependence, the merchants would often concentrate their activities in the villages where the peasants had plied various trades since time immemorial and had engaged in various types of production (textile production in particular) to supply their own needs and those of their families. The merchants supplied such village craftsmen with raw materials and tools—spinning-wheels, looms, dyes, etc., while the latter soon became completely dependent on them. The merchants paid these craftsmen as little as possible for their work, demanded large interest on the raw materials, tools and other facilities with which they supplied them, and finally sold what they produced for as high a price as possible. The village craftsmen soon found themselves highly dependent on these merchants, especially when the latter started to supervise production on the spot.

Merchants of this type loaned craftsmen raw materials and tools and demanded that the latter should sell what they produced to them and them alone, knowing full well that they would receive much more in the long run than they had originally paid for the materials loaned. Sooner or later they would receive not only the cost of the objects supplied to the craftsmen and exact interest, but would also glean additional profit through sale of the finished product. For the finished product was worth more than the raw materials out of which it was made, not simply because the price of the finished product includes the price of the raw materials and part of the cost of the tools of production employed, but first and foremost because its production required a specific amount of human labour.

The entrepreneurs paid the craftsmen for only a part of the labour they expended on production, keeping the rest for themselves. The labour which is appropriated in this way by the entrepreneur is called surplus labour and the finished product produced by surplus labour and later sold on the market brings the entrepreneur surplus value or profit, for the sake of which the entrepreneur asserts his authority over the working men in his hire. At this stage of social development he did not play a direct role in the supervision of production and let it continue in the form in which it had hitherto existed, but he was already paying workers who were producing more value than the cost of their labour power. These entrepreneurs exploited their hired workers in order to receive surplus value. The price for which the entrepreneur gains control over the labour power of a working man is the latter's wages. The sum the entrepreneur invests in the work of crafts-

men and village artisans is known as capital—the sum bringing surplus value—and he is called a capitalist. Surplus value is an essential feature of the capitalist mode of production; it is the end towards which the activity of the capitalist is directed and in which he sees the meaning of his activity.

The Manufactory

Now let us turn to the way in which the early capitalists tried to increase their profits. First they used to buy the finished product of individual producers, later they started to supply artisans with raw materials and tools and finally they started to take a direct part in the supervision of production. This supervision took a variety of forms. For example, the entrepreneur would oblige the artisans to carry out some of the more costly or complex operations, such as the dying of cloth, on his own premises, under his direct supervision. Then he might later concentrate all the operations involved in a specific type of production in special premises under his direct supervision. The latter form led to the appearance of the manufactory, an early institution of capitalist production which became widespread in Europe at the end of the fifteenth century and which was to predominate until the eighteenth century: as a result this period has come to be known as the “manufactory period”. This name is derived from the Latin expression *manu facio* (I make by hand), since all the essential operations in these manufactories were carried out by hand—by the workman aided by the small instruments or tools which he held in his hand. If the capitalist saw to it that all the work, i.e., all the operations required for the preparation of a given product, was carried on in premises under his supervision the manufactory was described as centralised; if on the other hand the capitalist hired individual men who worked in their own workshops, this type of manufactory was known as a scattered one. Finally there existed a third type in which some of the production operations were carried out in the workshops of individual artisans and the rest in premises belonging to the entrepreneur under his supervision and management.

The Emergence of a Class of Hired Workers

The three types of manufactory outlined above were all capitalist enterprises since those who worked in them were hired workers, selling their labour power to the capitalist, who by exploiting this labour power obtained for himself surplus value, the main part of his profit. The thirst for profit was the driving force behind all the capitalist's undertakings and he always strove to increase it, by

trying to pay the worker as little as possible and forcing him to produce as much as possible. As far as the first aim was concerned, the capitalist had a vested interest in ensuring that there were as many poor people in society as possible, deprived of means of production and means of subsistence, who were therefore compelled to sell their labour power, the one thing which was left to them. The more such people there were the less the capitalist would have to pay them in wages. So as to raise the labour productivity of his hired workers the manufactory owner would introduce detailed division of labour: each worker would carry out a single operation which would mean that he would get used to one and the same movements to be executed with the same tools.

These detail workers would soon execute their part of the production process more quickly and thus be able to carry out a greater number of operations in a set period of time than the mediaeval craftsman who carried out all the production processes alone which involved several operations all requiring different movements.

Another factor which played an important role in the raising of labour productivity was the improvement of tools used in production. The better the tools used by the manufactory workers, the more suitable for the single operation they were obliged to carry out, the less time they would have to spend on it and the more they would be able to produce. Naturally, it was in the manufactory owners' interests to acquire improved tools and thus make increased profits.

The new mode of production promised all those who invested their capital in it large profits, and the number of manufactories quickly increased. Each manufactory owner was likely to have a neighbour competing with him, trying to produce better products more cheaply, since that was the only way to feel secure despite competitors. The capitalist mode of production therefore brought about major improvements in tools of production and a revolution in production techniques. The introduction of new, improved techniques by the early capitalists in the interests of obtaining maximum profits was a major progressive feature of this mode of production. The urge to streamline production processes led those concerned to think of replacing human hands by machines which would carry out similar operations but with much more speed and precision. This led to the appearance of the machine, the replacement of the manufactory by the factory, and resulted in the enormous technical progress typical of the modern era. The early manufacturers intensified the labour of their hired workers by improving the organisation at their enterprises, giving better training to their workers, as a result of which many of them became

expert at their trade, and finally by introducing better instruments of labour.

The emergence of the new, capitalist mode of production had historic consequences, and ushered in a new era in the history of mankind. These consequences first made themselves felt in the catastrophe which befell all small producers in both the towns and the villages. The working masses in town and country soon became impoverished proletarians, i.e., people who, being bereft of the means and tools of production and the means of subsistence, were obliged to live by selling their labour power.

Primary Accumulation of Capital

For exploitation of the hired workers to become possible it was necessary that the great mass of peasants and artisans should be deprived of the tools and means of production and the means of subsistence and thus be obliged to live by selling their labour power. Indeed, this phenomenon preceded the emergence of the capitalist mode of production throughout the world. Through expropriations driving the peasants from the land, through the ruin and impoverishment of craftsmen, all means of production—land, instruments of production, and hence the working people's means of subsistence—came to be concentrated in the hands of a minority of capitalists, who were able to dispose as they pleased, not only of all that they had appropriated from the working masses, but also of the working people who had been compelled to sell them their labour power.

The evolution of this primary accumulation of capital is most easily traced in England, a country which presents a classical model of capitalist development. Because of its abundant rainfall England was rich in lush meadowland. For centuries the English had prospered by breeding sheep and selling wool to Flanders, where it was made into cloth. As the demand for such textiles grew, wool became more expensive, and by the end of the fifteenth century English merchants started to organise their own manufactories for the production of woollen cloth. The demand for wool grew and the representatives of the English ruling class, in order to expand their profitable wool production started to drive their peasants off their land, enclose the land thus seized so that no one could use it, and put out large herds of sheep to graze there. Sometimes whole villages were destroyed in this way, and the peasants who were ruined after losing their land made their way to the towns where they would seek work at the manufactories.

Expropriation of the Peasants

The outstanding English scholar of the sixteenth century, Thomas Moor, wrote that in England "sheep are eating people". By the mid-eighteenth century the peasantry as a class had disappeared in England. The land was in the hands of the lords, powerful landowners, who rented it out to farmers to be worked by them with the help of hired labourers. This was how the capitalist mode of production came to predominate in English agriculture.

Economic progress was achieved at the cost of ruining the small-scale producers and since the manufactories were unable, particularly in the early stages, to absorb the whole mass of peasants driven from their land, an enormous number of them were obliged to wander about the country searching for casual labour, and if they could not find any, then to resort to begging, thieving and pillage. The government responded by introducing harsh laws against vagrancy. Hanging was the penalty for stealing anything of the same value as a piglet. According to a law introduced by Edward VI in 1547 all those who avoided work were to be made slaves of those who reported them for vagrancy. Such reprobates could be flogged and put in chains and thus obliged to work. If a worker was absent without leave for two weeks, he was sentenced to slavery for life and the letter S was branded on his forehead or cheek; if he ran away a third time he was hanged as a criminal.

The Ruin of the Craftsmen

Although the lot of the peasants driven from their lands was a cruel one, the lot of the craftsmen was no lighter. The growing number of manufactories in many spheres of industry inevitably led to the ruin of craftsmen, who were unable to compete with the manufactories which were able to produce goods that were cheaper and of a higher quality. Craftsmen were obliged to close down their workshops and, if they were lucky, hire themselves out to work in manufactories and otherwise join the ranks of the vagrants and paupers.

Colonial Plunder

Having already brought about the impoverishment of their own peasantry, the English ruling classes (in particular those sections of them which were directly concerned with capitalist production, i.e., the landowners who had become capitalists and the manufactory owners, only too happy to be admitted into the ranks of the

nobility), spurred on by an insatiable thirst for wealth, turned their attention to colonies. It was at this time that the colonial policies of the European powers, colonialism with all its horrors—the enslavement of foreign peoples, shameless plunder and expropriation of their riches—took shape. First the Spaniards and the Portuguese, and then the English, turned their hungry gaze to the newly discovered lands. The cruel and ruthless Spanish and Portuguese hidalgos literally laid waste Central America, the English wiped out large numbers of the native population of North America and the Dutch penetrated South-East Asia.

The Dutch who had at first lagged behind their English and Spanish rivals, soon made up for lost time. The history of Dutch colonialism in the seventeenth century provides a classical example of an early colonial power with its record of treachery, bribery, murder and base cruelty. The Dutch colonialists even sank as low as kidnapping men on the island of Celebes to add to the slave population of Java, special kidnapping detachments being formed for the purpose. Thieves, merchants and interpreters were the main instigators of this trade in their fellow humans, while the native chiefs were the main traders.

The colonial system made possible an accelerated growth of trade and shipping. "Monopoly trading companies" provided powerful levers for the concentration of capital. The colonies provided the rapidly growing number of manufactories with reliable commodity markets and the monopoly of these markets led to intensified accumulation. Fortunes acquired outside Europe by means of outright plunder, the enslavement of the native populations and murder, flowed into these trading companies' coffers, providing new capital, which served to intensify the exploitation of the working people in the mother-countries who were gradually being reduced to poverty in the course of the process of primary accumulation. The colonial system which persisted until recently subjected the enslaved peoples to merciless exploitation: to ensure the successful and uninterrupted organisation of this exploitation the colonialists made sure that the population of the new possessions lived in poverty and ignorance, convinced that the worse the living conditions of the colonial peoples, the smaller the wages they would need pay for their labour. Thus the colonialists held back the industrial development of the colonies, forcing the native peoples to produce raw materials for European industry and then to buy the manufactured goods produced in the mother-country. Such exploitation continued for centuries and the colonial exploiters of the past from Spain, England, Holland and France have in many instances been replaced by US monopolies.

The Formation of the Bourgeoisie and the Proletariat

The advent of capitalism brought about fundamental changes in the structure of society. Two new classes emerged, the industrial bourgeoisie, owners of the means of production, and the proletariat who did not possess them and who were thus obliged to sell their labour power.

Absolutism

Meanwhile in the sphere of politics limited monarchies gave way to absolute monarchies—arbiters between the former ruling class of noble landowners and the bourgeoisie, and defenders of both classes from the revolutionary movements of the popular masses, exposed to the exploitation of both groups. The bourgeoisie was gaining more and more economic power but was as yet still not strong enough to contend with the former ruling class for power. Power remained in the hands of the nobles but the centralised monarchy, seeking to raise its revenue, supported the capitalists and bourgeoisie as they consolidated their power, while the latter turned to the absolute monarchy for support, since it assured them the prerequisites for successful competition on foreign markets and provided subsidies to the manufactories, promoting their expansion.

In a number of European states, both large and small, a monarchy of this type was to appear. Even in England under the Tudors (1485-1603) the monarchs enjoyed a rare degree of power, despite the existence of parliament. Yet the growth of the bourgeoisie and its wealth spelt the end of the age of the nobility. Turning the discontent of the popular masses to their own ends, the bourgeoisie started to aspire to power. The era of bourgeois revolutions was not far away.

The Beginning of the Reformation in Germany

The first, although unsuccessful bourgeois revolution took place in Germany. Initially it took the form of a revolt against the Catholic Church—the ideological mask of the nobility's interests—which, making the most out of the political chaos in an empire broken up into numerous petty states in which there was no strong central government to stand in its way, could look on Germany as the main source of its revenue. For this reason, when capitalist development was at its very earliest stage, the German burghers



Luther in Wittenberg burning the Papal Bull excommunicating him from the Church. Seventeenth-century engraving

began to protest against the endless material demands made on the population by both the local clergy, in particular the powerful bishops, and the main bastion of the Church, the Papacy.

Martin Luther

The German bourgeoisie through its spokesman Martin Luther (1483-1546) protested against the exorbitant material demands, and against the Papacy, calling for the subordination of that Church to the secular government. A broad movement spread through Germany and later came to enjoy the support of the popular masses as well. However, the common people demanded not only modifications in Church affairs but also wide social reforms, undermining the very basis of feudal society. In some instances still more radical ideas took on, concerning the reorganization of society in keeping with "god's justice", ideas which reflected the as yet ill-defined notions of the popular masses—in particular the immediate predecessors of the German proletariat—with regard to the possibility of social equality.

The Great Peasant War

A widespread uprising of the peasant masses—the Great Peasant War—broke out in 1524 and its scale and extreme radicalism was soon to alarm the bourgeoisie to such an extent that they dissociated themselves from the movement, allied with the nobility, and proceeded to participate in the cruel repression which put an end to the movement the following year. As a result the only changes that were introduced were those concerning the Church: alongside the Catholic Church a new Lutheran Church grew up with much simpler modes of worship, less ritual and sacraments and more emphasis on the Bible, which Luther translated into German from Latin thus making it much more accessible to the laity. These Church reforms not only failed to do away with feudal society, but on the contrary served to consolidate it. Church lands and property were confiscated by the princes, who were to profit most of all from the Reformation, growing richer at the Church's expense. Germany continued to suffer from political disunity as much as ever, while the emperor's power had become even more ephemeral.

The Revolution in the Netherlands

The first successful bourgeois revolution was the revolt in the Netherlands against Spain. This country with an advanced economy had been under Spanish rule since the fifteenth century.

By the beginning of the sixteenth century production in the manufactories was already of a high standard: in the south, in Flanders and Brabant and in the north, in the provinces of Holland and Zeeland, etc., stockbreeding, fishing (particularly herrings) and ship-building were well developed. Antwerp was a major centre of international trade.

The Netherlands were divided up into seventeen provinces, all of which were represented in the States-General. Yet the country was ruled over by the Hapsburgs, German emperors and Spanish kings, represented on the spot by a Spanish regent.

The dissonance between the advanced economic development of this country where capitalism was already taking shape and reactionary feudal Spain, in particular during the reign of the religious fanatic Philip II, was to lead to extremely dire consequences. The bourgeoisie of the Low Countries adopted Protestantism and went out of its way to preserve its liberties and privileges, including those of self-government. Meanwhile Philip tortured and burnt heretics and made ready to reassert Spanish power. He led his troops to the Netherlands intending to put an end to all aspirations to self-government.

This gave rise to a new and much stronger wave of discontent which was to embrace not only the bourgeoisie and the people but the nobility as well, who feared that their role in the state administration and the exploitation of the people would be taken over by the Spanish nobility, and that the country as a whole would suffer the same fate as Spain's American colonies.

This opposition soon developed into an open revolt which was to last from 1566 to 1609, when the northern provinces, led by Holland, freed themselves from Spanish rule and set up the independent Republic of the United Provinces, or simply the Republic of Holland. Only the southern provinces remained in Spanish hands and dragged out a rather wretched existence, while Holland, the first country to set up a colonial system, had reached the apogee of its economic power by 1648, and indeed constituted the model capitalist state of the seventeenth century. The popular masses at this time were subjected to extremely hard working conditions and social oppression, but indeed such a fate was in store for the peoples of all states developing on capitalist lines everywhere.

Thus, we have seen that the initial stage of capitalist development within the framework of the feudal order led to epoch-making changes in society and the state structure: two new classes emerged—the bourgeoisie and the proletariat; the class struggle took on a more complex form which in turn led to the appearance of absolute monarchies. The changes which took place in the domain of religion, science and culture, in other words in society's ideological superstructure, were no less far-reaching.

Humanism and the Renaissance

The new bourgeois class—the organisers of capitalist production both in the towns and in the country—needed to raise the level of labour productivity in their enterprises and to produce more, better and cheaper goods in order to compete successfully with their rivals. To this end it was important to know more about the qualities of the raw materials used; in short, a more precise knowledge of nature and its laws became necessary.

The beginning of the capitalist era was marked by the development of a new intellectual and cultural climate known as the Renaissance. The Renaissance, the Age of Humanism, was bound up with the emergence of the new, capitalist mode of production and the bourgeois class. Economic progress and expansion dealt a death blow to the old mediaeval philosophy supported in Western Europe by the Catholic Church, which attempted to transfer hopes of a just social order to the next life, teaching that man during

his sojourn on earth should place all his hopes in the Lord. Now the bourgeois entrepreneurs had started to pin their hopes on their own energy, initiative and ingenuity, and it was man not God that the new humanist philosophy was to centre round. The name Renaissance given to the period when humanist philosophy spread throughout Europe reflects the extent to which it represented a "rebirth" of classical culture. The humanists rediscovered the great scientific, and especially artistic achievements of the Greeks and the Romans and went out of their way to imitate them and, particularly in the field of science, continue where they had left off.

The first seeds of humanist culture appeared in Italy and soon bourgeois culture started to make rapid advances in other European countries. An important factor contributing to the spread of this new learning was the discovery of printing in the middle of the fifteenth century by Johann Gutenberg in Germany.

An outstanding figure appearing at the watershed between the religious culture of the Middle Ages and the new humanist culture was the Florentine poet, Dante Alighieri (1265-1321). His celebrated *Divine Comedy* was written in Italian and this fact in itself was of vital significance. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries a national consciousness took shape in many countries and humanist writers, despite their impeccable command of classical languages and the fact that they wrote their scientific treatises in Latin, turned to their native languages when it came to works of literature.

The works of the humanist writers were to contain many reflections on life around them; for their subjects they turned to secular rather than religious themes, and to the common people rather than idealised knights for their characters. Among the brilliant pleiad of poets, writers, and dramatists of this period to receive universal acclaim were Francesco Petrarch and Giovanni Boccaccio in Italy, François Rabelais in France, Ulrich von Hutten in Germany, Erasmus of Rotterdam in the Netherlands, Miguel Cervantes in Spain and William Shakespeare in England.

The Renaissance period also saw a great flowering of art. Painters and sculptors adhering to realist principles faithfully reflected the world in which they lived extolling the beauty of the human body and the nobility of the human spirit (Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Raphael, Titian, Velasquez, Rembrandt and so on).

It was also an age of great scientific discoveries. The humanists' approach to the world was empirical, and it was the scientists of this era who laid the foundations of the modern natural sciences (Cardano and Galileo), mechanics (Leonardo da Vinci and Galileo), astronomy (Copernicus and Galileo), anatomy and physiology

(Vesalius and Harvey) and the materialist interpretation of nature (Francis Bacon and Giordano Bruno).

In politics the humanists supported centralised state power, which assured the maintenance of law and order. They attacked the Catholic Church which taught that the feudal order, just as the world as a whole, was created by God and hence every protest against the existing order was sinful.

The Reformation

Many countries which had started to develop along capitalist lines introduced Church reforms. They broke away from the Roman Catholic Church, refused to acknowledge the Pope as the head of the Church, making it subordinate to temporal rulers, kings, princes or city governments, and bringing its teaching more into line with the interest of the bourgeoisie. A leading teacher of the Reformation was Jean Calvin, who preached that merchants and entrepreneurs who prospered were assured of salvation in the next life, while workers should work conscientiously for their masters, since only by so doing could they, in their turn, become such prosperous property-owners. Calvin justified slavery and colonialism and all the evils arising during the process of primary accumulation.

All the countries with progressive economies adopted the Protestant religion. Throughout the larger part of Europe the new religion was adopted either in the form of Luther's teaching in the new Lutheran Church in Germany which supported the rule of the princes, or in the form of the teaching of the Swiss reformer Zwingli, who adapted his teaching to suit the interests of urban trade and the industrial bourgeoisie.

All attempts of the Catholic Church to regain its former power failed. The Jesuit Order, founded in 1540, despite casuistry, mental agility and cunning insinuation, were only successful in a few countries (Germany, Poland, Lithuania) in bringing a number of lost sheep back to the fold after lapses of heresy (as the Catholics called Protestantism).

Chapter Nine

AMERICA ON THE EVE OF THE EUROPEAN CONQUEST

The Peoples of Central America

When America was discovered and conquered by European colonisers it was peopled by numerous Indian tribes whose level of social and cultural development varied considerably. Some of them had attained a high level of civilisation while others lived in extremely primitive societies.

The Maya culture, the oldest known on the American continent, developed in the north-western part of Central America. Initially it was centred on the shores of Lake Petén Itzá and in the area to the south-east, along the valley of the river Usumacinta (northern Guatemala and the modern Mexican state of Tabasco). Later, however, the centre of Maya culture was to shift to the Yucatán peninsula, where in the tenth century the city-states of Chichen-Itzá, Mayapán, Uxmal and others arose, between which bitter feuds were to be waged for several centuries.

The composition of Maya society in its period of decline (tenth-fifteenth centuries) was far from homogeneous. The nobility and priesthood made up the ruling strata. The nobility owned the cocoa plantations, apiaries and salt deposits and possessed many slaves. There was also a separate class of traders. The inhabitants of each settlement lived in a community which retained various features of clan society. The common people were obliged to work the nobles' fields and pay them rent in kind and also to build roads, temples, noblemen's houses and other buildings. The slaves, consisting of prisoners of war, criminals, debtors and orphans, were used for the most gruelling work. Thus, while maintaining a number of institutions typical of clan society, life in the Maya settlements began to exhibit various features of a slave-holding society.

Maya culture exerted a considerable influence on the neighbouring peoples. Agriculture, bee-keeping, crafts and trade were well

developed and a highly original art flourished (architecture, sculpture and painting). There were astonishing achievements in mathematics and astronomy. At the beginning of our era a hieroglyphic script was invented—the first writing on the American continent.

The Maya's neighbours included the Zapotecs, Olmecs and Totonacs. The north-east coast of Mexico was inhabited by the Huastecs who, although they spoke a Maya language, had not attained anything like such an advanced level of culture.

In Central Mexico, known at that time as the Anáhuac valley (meaning "land of water" in the Nahua language), the Toltec culture made impressive advances in the second half of the 1st millennium A.D. Large cities grew up (the largest of which was Teotihuacán) with monumental buildings and sculpture and well-developed trade. This people also had writing and a calendar, both based on the Maya's.

The Toltec civilisation was wiped out at the beginning of the 2nd millennium A.D. as a result of invasions of the Anáhuac valley by war-like Nahua tribes. One of the most important of these tribes at this period were the Culhuas, whose central city Culhuacán was situated on the southern shore of Lake Texcoco. Another important city-state was Texcoco on the eastern shore of the lake. In the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries the Tepanecs rose to prominence and succeeded in subjugating Culhuacán, Texcoco and the subject states of the latter in the Anáhuac valley. They also conquered Tenochtitlán situated on an island in Lake Texcoco and founded in about 1325 by the Aztecs (who belonged to the same group of tribes, spoke a Nahua language and who had come to the valley in the twelfth century).

In 1426 the Aztecs of Tenochtitlán formed an alliance with the Texcoco and Tlacopan tribes (the latter came from the western shores of the lake). After overthrowing Tepanec rule, the allies started to wage war against the neighbouring tribes and eventually succeeded in gaining control over the whole of the Anáhuac valley. Soon the Aztecs became the leaders of the alliance and in the course of various wars that followed they brought the whole of Mexico under their sway. In addition to these military achievements they also assimilated the complex culture which had grown up by that time in the Anáhuac valley. This culture flowered at the beginning of the fifteenth century after the Aztecs of Tenochtitlán had asserted themselves as the leading Central American tribe.

The basis of Aztec agriculture was cultivation made possible by irrigation systems. The main crop was maize which grew well despite the extremely backward farming methods based entirely on manual labour. Beans, pumpkins, tomatoes, cocoa, cotton and tobacco were also grown. The most important crafts practised by



Façade of a Maya temple at Chichen-Itzá known as the "Nunnery". New Empire period

the Aztecs were pottery, weaving and metalwork. Building techniques were fairly advanced which enabled this people to build dams, canals and fortress-like dwelling houses made of rough bricks or stone. Barter trade was carried on in the busy markets of Tenochtitlán and other cities.

The Aztecs lived in clans with elected leaders. Land was owned by communes whose members worked it. The main military commander of the Aztecs (Tlacatecuhtli) who was elected from among the members of a given tribe was in practice the tribe's supreme ruler in times of peace as well as war. He also carried out important religious functions. The Aztec commander and his council exercised control over war operations carried out by all members of the alliance. Engels described the federation led by the Aztecs as "a confederacy of three tribes, which had made a number of others tributary, and which was governed by a Federal Council and a federal military chief".

The constant wars waged by the Aztecs eventually led to unequal distribution of property, since those warriors who distinguished themselves most in battle started to receive more than their

fellows when booty was distributed and conquered territory was divided up among the victors. Often those taken prisoner after battle were made to work as slaves. As this inequality increased, some of the Aztecs became slaves of the richer members of their own tribe. Slavery became an essential institution of Aztec society. The emergence of a clan nobility also progressed rapidly and incessant wars consolidated the supreme ruler's power, which was in practice soon to become hereditary.

All this bears witness to the disintegration of the clan structure of Aztec society. At the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth century, this society was in the midst of a gradual transition to a class society with the appropriate forms of state power.

At this period the art of the Aztecs reached impressive heights particularly in the fields of architecture and sculpture. The Aztecs used a solar calendar based for the main part on the Mayan calendar. Writing was still at the formative stage at this time and was of a pictographic variety including some hieroglyphs.

As the last vestiges of the clan system gradually disappeared, the Aztec ruling class intensified the plunder and exploitation of the poor of its own tribe and the enslaved members of subject peoples. In the course of the numerous wars which they waged throughout the greater part of the fifteenth century and at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Aztecs not only defeated the other peoples inhabiting the Anáhuac valley, but pushed across the mountains to the shores of the Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific coast. They exacted tribute from the conquered tribes and sometimes seized part of their lands and took large numbers prisoner. Many of these prisoners were sacrificed to the Aztec gods, while the rest were put to work as slaves, tilling the land, building temples and other edifices or working as house slaves.

This treatment of the subject peoples led to frequent uprisings and served to strengthen the resistance on the part of the tribes the Aztecs tried to subdue. The position grew particularly acute during the reign of Montezuma II (1503-1520) who tried in vain to halt the disintegration which had set in.

The Peoples of South America

The ancient civilisations of South America developed in the Andes, inhabited by the Quechua, Aymara and other peoples who attained a high level of material and cultural development. In the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, the Incas (who belonged to the same language group as the Quechua) led by Pachacutec, Tupac Yupanqui, and Huayna Capac subjugated a number of tribes in that area and set up a large state making Cuzco their

capital. This state was led by the Sapa Inca ("Only Inca"), who regarded himself as the son of the Sun and who was worshipped as a god. The official language of the Inca state was Quechua, dialects of which were spoken by many of the subject tribes.

The Incas were fairly advanced in agriculture, stockbreeding, crafts (metal-working, pottery, weaving, etc.) and architecture. They achieved notable successes in mathematics, astronomy, medicine and other sciences, and used a hieroglyphic script. Road-building and trade were also advanced.

The main social unit in the land of the Incas was the *ayllu* or commune, the members of which worked together to till the land, which was distributed among the individual families. However, the Sapa Inca was considered owner of all the land; a large part of the crop harvest and animal produce was required for state and religious purposes.

The Pueblo Indian tribes (Hopi, Zuñi, Taño, Keres, etc.) inhabiting the valleys of the Rio Grande del Norte and Colorado rivers; the Tupi, Guaraní, Caribans, Arawaks and Brazilian Caiaipo in the Orinoco and Amazon basins; the war-like Mapuche from the pampas and the shores of the Pacific Ocean (called the Araucans by the Europeans); the tribes in various parts of present-day Peru and Ecuador—the Colorados, the Jivaros and the Záparos; the tribes of La Plata (Diaguita, Charrua, Querandi, etc.); the Patagonian Tehuelche and the Indians of Tierra del Fuego (Ona, Yahgan, Chono)—all lived in primitive societies at different stages of development. This also applied to the numerous Indian and Eskimo tribes of North America. Many of these tribes united to form inter-tribal groups and alliances—the Algonkins, Iroquois, Muskogi, Sioux, Athapascans, etc.

The Colonisation of America

At the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth century the natural course of development of the peoples of America was forcefully interrupted by European conquerors, in particular the Spanish conquistadores.

Writing about the fate of the native population of the American continent, Engels pointed out: "The Spanish conquest cut short all further independent development."

The conquest and colonisation of America that was of such fateful consequence for its peoples can be traced back to complex socio-economic processes which were then taking place in European society.

The development of trade and industry and the emergence of the bourgeoisie and capitalist production relations in the late fif-

teenth and the early sixteenth century within the feudal society of Western Europe gave rise to the urge to open up new trade routes and seize the incalculable riches of East and South Asia. It was with this aim in mind that a number of expeditions were undertaken, particularly by the Spaniards. The role of Spain in the great discoveries of this period can be explained not only by her geographical position but also by the existence of a large impoverished nobility, which after the completion of the Expulsion of the Moors (1492) was unable to find suitable occupation and feverishly sought means of acquiring wealth, dreaming of discovering the fabulous "golden land" of Eldorado. "Gold was the magic word which drove the Spaniards across the Atlantic," wrote Engels. "Gold was the first thing the white man asked for on setting foot on an unknown shore."

By the beginning of the sixteenth century Columbus and other seafarers had discovered a number of the West Indian islands, charted the Northern coast and a considerable part of the Eastern coast of South America and most of the Caribbean coast of Central America. As early as 1494 the Treaty of Tordesillas was concluded by Spain and Portugal to define the two countries' spheres of colonial expansion.

A large number of adventurers from the Iberian peninsula, impoverished members of the nobility, mercenaries, criminals, etc., set off for the newly discovered lands. By means of deceit and violence they seized the lands of the local population and proclaimed them Spanish or Portuguese possessions. The conquistadores plundered, enslaved and exploited the Indians and ruthlessly put down any attempts at resistance. They destroyed whole towns and villages with barbarous cruelty. As Marx was to put it, "plunder and violence was the sole aim of the Spanish adventurers in North America".

The feverish lust for gold spurred the conquerors on to discover more and more new lands. In 1513 Balboa crossed the isthmus of Panama, then known as Golden Castille, and reached the Pacific coast; Ponce de León discovered the Florida peninsula, the first Spanish possession in North America.

A few years later the Yucatán peninsula was discovered and in 1521 Hernando Cortes finally conquered Central Mexico after a war lasting three years. This was accomplished at the expense of the ancient culture of the Aztecs and after the total destruction of their capital Tenochtitlán. It was in this period that Magellan charted the Atlantic coast of the continent south of La Plata and the strait separating the mainland from Tierra del Fuego.

Soon the conquistadores and their men were to turn their attention to South America. In the early 1530s a Spanish expedition led by Francisco Pizarro and Diego de Almagro conquered Peru,

wiping out the splendid Inca civilisation. This conquest began with the bloodthirsty repression of the defenceless Indians in the town of Cajamarca, the initiator of which was the priest Valverde. The Inca ruler Atahualpa was taken captive by means of foul trick and put to death; the Inca capital of Cuzco was also taken by the conquistadores. Moving southwards, Almagro and his men made their way into territory they were later to name Chile (1535-1537). Here, however, they found themselves up against the war-like Araucans and suffered a temporary setback. Meanwhile Pedro de Mendoza had embarked on the colonisation of La Plata. Large numbers of Europeans also sought to gain possession of the northern part of South America, where they imagined the mythical land of Eldorado, rich in gold and precious stones, to lie. It was in search of Eldorado that Spanish expeditions led by Ordaz, Jiménez de Quesada, Benalcázar and detachments of German mercenaries led by the Alfinger, von Speyer and Federmann made their way in the 1530s to the Orinoco and Magdalena valleys. In 1538, Jiménez de Quesada, Federmann, and Benalcázar marching from the north, east and south respectively, met up on the Cundinamarca plateau, near the town of Bogota.

Meanwhile Brazil was being colonised by the Portuguese. At the beginning of the 1540s Orellana reached the Amazon and sailed down it to the Atlantic coast. A new expedition into Chile was also undertaken at that time under Pedro de Valdivia, but by the early fifties it had only succeeded in capturing the northern and central parts of the country.

The penetration into the central parts of the South American continent by the Spanish and Portuguese colonialists went on during the second half of the sixteenth century and the colonisation of some areas, such as southern Chile and northern Mexico, was to take much longer still. However, the English, French and Dutch were also anxious to stake their claims in the vast, rich lands of the New World, and managed to seize lands in South and Central America and the West Indies.

Chapter Ten

THE CENTRALISED RUSSIAN STATE FROM THE LATE FIFTEENTH TO THE EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENTURY. THE PEASANT WAR

The Growing Power of the Nobles

In the sixteenth century important changes took place in the structure of Russian society. Although society remained feudal, within the framework of the class of landowning nobles many new developments were taking shape. Formerly the powerful boyars had been the main landowners. Within this group the descendants of the former princes were particularly rich and influential, owning enormous tracts of land.

When the unified state took shape the position of these powerful boyars grew more difficult, while the *dvoryane* (as the old *pomeshchiki* came to be known—nobles who received land in return for service rendered) prospered. As the individual principalities lost their former independence, the prosperity of the boyars' and princes' estates declined and they were often divided up and frequently sold or mortgaged. The *dvoryane* grew in numbers. The boyars vied with the tsars for power, and in their struggle to curb the power of the boyars the tsars came to rely more and more on the *dvoryane* for support.

The *dvoryane* were also landowners but their estates were different from those of the boyars. The enormous estates of the latter were hereditary property, handed down from father to son. The estates of the *dvoryane* were smaller and they did not inherit them but received them direct from the tsar in return for military service. If a member of the *dvoryanstvo* ceased to serve with the forces of the Russian state his lands were automatically confiscated.

This meant that the *dvoryane* were dependent on the tsar of Russia. They were quite content with this state of affairs, since earlier when they had been dependent on the petty princes their position had been decidedly less favourable. They had been nothing but insignificant servants of the princes or still worse, ser-

vants of the princes' servants, and received tiny estates in return. The prince's bailiff supervised their service. During that period the *dvoryane* were quite cut off from the outside world in the confines of remote estates.

As the individual princedoms gradually merged in a unified Russian state the position of the *dvoryane* started to improve considerably. The tsars of Russia accepted large numbers of the *dvoryane* into their service and gave them estates. A completely different life opened up for the *dvoryane*: it was much more worthwhile for them to serve a rich and powerful Russian tsar. He distributed larger estates and more peasants and service to him was much more palatable—it meant more freedom of action, material gain and social prestige after the previous relative humiliation. It was to this mass of *dvoryane* that the new Tsar Ivan IV (known as the Terrible) turned for support when he sought to introduce order and state control in the formerly independent princedoms.

The Reforms of Ivan the Terrible. The Oprichnina

The large territory of the Russian state included the former independent Russian princedoms, and little had actually changed in the administration and customs of many of them. The descendants of the former princes still exerted considerable power in the provinces. Isolated pockets of the former princedoms still held out clinging to their independence, ruled over by the boyars and petty princes, who still had armed detachments at their disposal and went to war with whole armies of retainers. As before, these princes used to give small estates to their vassals, issuing charters to this effect, referring to themselves as sovereigns and enjoying complete authority over the fates of the commoners in their service. As before the common people looked upon the local boyar as their overlord rather than the tsar. All these factors undermined the authority of the centralised state administration. In Moscow itself the boyars obstructed the implementation of governmental policies. They considered that their noble blood made them the social equals of the tsar and they were unwilling to submit to his supreme authority. The princes undermined the consolidation of a centralised state, threatening its very existence. From early in his reign Ivan IV started to seek ways to enforce strong central government.

In his struggle against the boyars the tsar turned to the *dvoryane*. In 1564 when he set up the *oprichnina* (a whole complex of measures designed to consolidate the autocracy) this struggle entered a decisive phase.

In 1564 Ivan IV unexpectedly left Moscow for Alexandrovskaya Sloboda, a short distance to the north of the capital, and announced to the boyars that he no longer had any desire to be their tsar. He demanded that he be allowed to divide his kingdom into two parts, in one of which he would rule as he alone saw fit. One of his first tasks would be to pick out from among his followers those whom he wished to retain in his service and who were suited to the new work in store for them.

The tsar's request was complied with and the state was divided into two distinct and independent realms—an *Oprichnina* and a *Zemshchina*, the former under his personal rule. Ivan IV gradually incorporated into this land the best half of the state complete with the rich towns and trade routes, driving out the boyars, depriving them of their hereditary property and having many of them executed. Those whom he left unharmed were expelled into the *Zemshchina* where the old boyar rule still held sway. Ivan the Terrible even instituted there for appearances' sake a new "tsar", the Tartar Simeon Bekbulatovich who was in great awe of the tsar and obediently carried out all his commands. The tsar deliberately wrote formal petitions to him, signing his name without any title as if he was one of Bekbulatovich's subjects. In practice however it was Ivan IV who ruled over them all.

In this way the power of the boyars in the provinces was seriously undermined. They were not however deprived of the status of privileged landowners. Those among them who survived the conflict with the tsar now occupied a position similar to that of the *dvoryane* and were happy to receive land wherever it was given them. The tsar distributed the hereditary estates of the boyars among the *dvoryane*, they were given many new estates often complete with peasants who were obliged to work for them.

The reckless greed of Ivan's supporters knew no bounds. They seized the boyars' property and made off with the peasants' horses, cows and corn. If the peasants put up any resistance they were murdered. One of them was known to boast: "I set off with one horse and came back with forty-nine. Twenty-two of them were drawing sleighs piled high with divers wares."

Ivan's *oprichniki* (the *dvoryane* who had supported Ivan IV when he set up his new realm of *oprichnina*) galloped across the land with a dog's head and a broom tied to their saddles to signify that they would bare their teeth and make short work of their sovereign's enemies like dogs and that they would sweep all treason out of the land.

Ivan IV carried out his reforms with merciless cruelty. It was no coincidence that later the words *oprichnik* and *oprichnina* came to stand for the unbridled arbitrariness of the loyal curs of autocracy. The "justification" for this institution was that it did

away with the power of the boyars in their former princedoms and replaced the old order by the real power of the tsar. In the process, the lesser nobles who were granted land in return for their service and who provided the tsar's main support were to come to constitute a much more powerful social group. It was they who built Ivan's kingdom.

Serfdom

As the power of the *dvoryane* grew the position of the peasants greatly worsened. Their obligations to their masters were greatly increased, as were the landowners' powers to force them to work. Earlier the peasants had been able to change masters and at specific periods of the year go to settle in a new area. Ivan IV was to change all this: the time when peasants were allowed to change masters was confined to the week either side of St. Yuri's Day (November 26th) which fell at the end of the farming season and thus meant a minimum of loss to the landowners.

At the end of Ivan the Terrible's reign this ancient right was done away with altogether. Gradually the landowners bound their peasants to the land and serfdom took root.

The Annexation of the Volga Basin and Western Siberia

Not far from the eastern borders of the Russian state was a broad and easily navigable river, the Volga, providing an excellent route to the East—to Persia and Turkey and still further afield via the Caspian Sea. As yet however the Russians did not control the river for the whole of its length. After the disintegration of the Golden Horde the Tartars had set up two khanates on the Volga, centred on Kazan and Astrakhan.

In 1552 Ivan the Terrible marched on Kazan with a large army of 150,000 soldiers and 150 cannon. The Russian troops laid siege to the town and this time Russian military equipment was to prove superior to that of the Tartars. Russian engineers dug holes under the walls of the city which they filled with boxes of gunpowder and then exploded. The troops then entered the city through the holes that had thus been made in the walls. Ivan the Terrible rode into the city in triumph. Four years later Ivan's troops were to gain another victory, over the Astrakhan Khanate. In this way Russia extended its power over the whole of the Volga basin and was thus able to open up an important new trade route, as well as strengthening her eastern borders. In the south, the borders of Russia extended as far as the lower reaches of the Terek and the

foothills of the Caucasus. Kabarda voluntarily passed under Russian protectorship and in the middle of the sixteenth century Bashkiria followed suit.

Beyond the Urals there still existed the Siberian Khanate, covering part of Western Siberia including the Tobol and Irtysh river valleys. The merchants of Novgorod had been wont to come this far for furs. In the sixteenth century this territory was ruled over by Khan Kuchum, who exploited the local inhabitants and demanded tribute from them in the form of furs. The Russian *dvoryane* of the Stroganov family who had come to settle in those parts helped the Russian state to gain possession of the Siberian Khanate. They mustered a small force of free Cossacks who had fled from Russia to avoid oppression at the hands of the boyars, and put them and several bands of their armed retainers under the command of Yermak Timofeyevich, supplying him with gunpowder, bullets, cannon and grain. Yermak's final force consisted of some 800 men. With this small force he was to occupy vast territories.

In 1581 Ivan the Terrible gave a charter to the Stroganovs permitting them to conquer Siberia. Yermak's men rode down from the eastern slopes of the Urals and attacked the Siberian Khanate. The Tartars were unable to contend with the firearms of the Russian troops. Yermak won the day but he did not succeed in making his way home from Siberia. He was drowned in the river Irtysh while escaping from a night attack made by the Tartars. Part of the population of Siberia professed allegiance to Russia of their own free will and by the end of the sixteenth century Russian villages started to grow up there.

Later, in the seventeenth century Eastern Siberia was also incorporated in the Russian state, so that by this time it included the eastern part of Europe and extended far beyond the Urals. During Ivan's reign the state had grown considerably in both size and power.

Cultural Development and the Introduction of Printing

The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries saw important cultural advances in Russia, centred on Moscow.

During the reign of Ivan the Terrible the first printing press was set up in Moscow, which meant that book production became at once a much quicker and cheaper process.

The first printer in Moscow was Ivan Fyodorov (who died in 1583). One of the very first books to be published was an edition of *The Acts of the Apostles* printed in ornamental Slavonic script.

This first printing house aroused the wrath of those who were



Ivan the Terrible receiving the Nogai ambassadors.
A 16th-century miniature

employed to copy books by hand, since they saw in this discovery a dangerous rival, which would deprive them of a livelihood. They destroyed the printing shop and Ivan Fyodorov was obliged to flee. Soon afterwards Ivan the Terrible arranged for it to be set up again but this time nearer his court in Alexandrovskaya Sloboda. Later a monument was erected to Ivan Fyodorov in Moscow not far from the Kremlin, near the site of his original printing house.

Russian crafts also flowered at this time, iron-casting in particular. One of the most famous iron-casters was Andrei Chokhov (died c. 1630) who worked at the cannon foundry in Moscow. Each of his cannon was of a distinctive shape; they were cast in wax moulds and were extremely efficient weapons. Each cannon was given a special name, such as Bear, Wolf, Vixen or Achilles. The most famous of them was the Tsar Cannon, which still stands in the grounds of the Moscow Kremlin. It weighs forty tons and its

rich decoration includes the figure of the Tsar on horseback—hence its name.

Many of the buildings erected during that period were to become famous examples of Russian architecture. They include the magnificent Cathedral of Basil the Blessed, which still enhances Red Square today. The church was built at the command of Ivan the Terrible to commemorate the capture of Kazan. It consists of a group of chapel towers crowned with domes; all the chapels are linked together by vaulted archways and have galleries round the walls. Each of the domes is decorated differently, with zig-zag and wave patterns. Yet they all harmonise in a delightful inimitable whole that is a joy to behold.

A famous Russian engineer of the period was Fyodor Kon, who built many famous fortifications in the second half of the sixteenth century. It was he who planned the walls and towers enclosing the White Town (the area within the present-day boulevards), thus making Moscow into a fortress. He also supervised the building of the mighty walls and towers of Smolensk, a project requiring the labour of six thousand workmen. At the very end of the sixteenth century the Ivan the Great Tower was raised to a height of 250 feet inside the walls of the Moscow Kremlin. This 250-foot tower is most impressive with its strict simplicity of line and elegant proportions. It was used both as belfry and watch-tower: vigilant watchmen kept a lookout from its upper gallery to make sure no enemies were approaching Moscow.

The Peasant War Led by Ivan Bolotnikov

The early seventeenth century was marked by a great deal of peasant unrest, more than there had ever been before in Russia. One outburst followed another and these years went down in history as the Time of Troubles. The most significant of these outbreaks was the peasant revolt led by Ivan Bolotnikov (d. 1608).

Bolotnikov was a serf in the service of Prince Telyatevsky. In his youth he had run away from his master, after which he had been taken prisoner by the Tartars and then sold to the Turks. After several years of back-breaking work as a galley-slave, he escaped from Turkey to Venice.

While in Venice Bolotnikov heard that large-scale peasant uprisings had broken out in Russia. Popular discontent had been rife ever since the reign of Ivan IV's son, Fyodor (1584-1598). These revolts continued during the regency of Boris Godunov who was later elected tsar, since Fyodor died leaving no heirs. During Boris Godunov's reign (1598-1605) a terrible famine spread in Russia lasting for three years. People were reduced to eating the



The Cathedral of Basil the Blessed in Moscow (1555-1561)



The Church of the Ascension in the village of Kolomenskoye near Moscow. 1532

bark of trees, cats and dogs. Masses of peasants ran away from their masters, and one immediate consequence was the formation of large bands of homeless peasants which took to attacking the *dvoryane* and the merchants. A number of pretenders were to appear on the scene putting forward claims to the throne. The protégé of the Polish nobles was a former monk Grigory Otrepyev who proclaimed to be Ivan the Terrible's son Dmitry. Dmitry the Pretender was hailed as Tsar of Russia by the Polish nobles. Meanwhile popular uprisings grew more and more frequent throughout the country.

Bolotnikov was an avowed opponent of slavery and he defended the interests of the common people. He was an intelligent, brave and resourceful man, with rich experience of life and well-versed in the art of war. By way of Germany and Poland he eventually made his way back to Russia and in 1606 he became the leader of the peasant insurgents. Oppressed peasants flocked to join him.

Bolotnikov sent proclamations throughout the land summoning the peasants to take up arms against the landowners: "Leave the boyars and the landowners, plunder their dwellings, seize their chattels. Wreak vengeance on the warlords, the servants of the tsar, lock them up." He was also joined by another peasant leader, Ileika Muromets, champion of the Cossack poor. Other oppressed peoples followed the Russian example: the Mordvinians in the Volga valley also rose up; discontent was rife among the Bashkirs in the Urals foothills, and the Kalmyks in the Astrakhan area. The peasant serfs were the driving force behind the revolt; they sought to do away with serfdom and put an end to feudal oppression. Bolotnikov urged the peasants to do away with the boyars, seize their land and property and divide it up among themselves. He declared the peasants free from feudal bondage and this became the main motive behind the uprising.

Bolotnikov's army marched on Moscow and set up camp near the city. The new Tsar Vassily Shuisky (1552-1612) set out to do battle with them.

On the approaches to Moscow treachery occurred in Bolotnikov's army. Some *dvoryane* from Ryazan who had hitherto supported him went over to Vassily Shuisky. Bolotnikov was obliged to retreat from Moscow and muster his forces near Tula. Shuisky laid siege to Tula in June 1607. By October famine was raging in Tula, yet Bolotnikov's followers still held out. Then the tsar gave orders for the river Upa which flowed through the city to be dammed. The river flooded the city and in October the town surrendered. Bolotnikov's eyes were put out and he was then drowned. The revolt was suppressed with ruthless ferocity.

The Common People's Struggle Against the Polish and Swedish Nobles in the Early Seventeenth Century

Unable to deal with the insurgent peasants with his own army, Tsar Vassily Shuisky decided to turn to the Swedish king for help. In the spring of 1609 foreign troops dressed in glistening steel armour marched into Novgorod. These were forces sent by the Swedish king which were made up of a total of 15,000 Swedish, German, French, English and Scottish mercenaries. Soon they had captured the whole province of Novgorod.

At this time Poland was very hostilely disposed to Sweden. As soon as the Swedish troops crossed the Russian frontier, Polish troops were also sent into Russia, for the Polish nobles were eager to claim their part of the booty. The Poles penetrated deep into Russia and at the village of Klushino (between Moscow and Smolensk) Shuisky's troops were routed.

In July 1610 the Muscovite boyars overthrew Shuisky, forced him to become a monk and started to vie with one another for power. They finally decided to elect a foreign prince as tsar—Wladyslaw, the 15-year-old son of the Polish King, Sigismund III (1587-1632).

Meanwhile Polish forces were advancing on Moscow. For a time power was in the hands of seven boyars, whose rule proved utterly ineffectual. They took an oath of allegiance to Wladyslaw in the Cathedral of the Dormition and opened the gates of the city to the Polish nobles. In the autumn of 1610 Polish troops occupied Moscow and their warlords were to become the country's new rulers. This was perhaps the nadir of Muscovite misfortune. Moscow, the capital of the realm, was in the hands of foreign conquerors: the Polish nobles set themselves up in the Kremlin, deployed their guards and seized the keys of the city. They forbade the peasants from the surrounding villages to enter the city and instituted a night curfew. The Polish soldiers sallied forth to the neighbouring villages, seizing grain, livestock and harassing the peasants. The Polish nobles stole many valuables from the treasury of the tsars and started to seize large estates for themselves and their followers. The Polish King Sigismund captured Smolensk and other towns on Russia's western borders, while the Swedes were occupying Novgorod.

Popular Resistance Led by Minin and Pozharsky

The foreign invaders were dismembering the Russian state. Something had to be done to save the country before it was too late. Only a widespread popular movement could put an end to

this sorry state of affairs. The common people rose to the occasion. Popular resistance began in the cities of northern Russia and was soon to centre on the town of Nizhny Novgorod on the Volga. The movement was organised by the mayor of Nizhny Novgorod, Kozma Minin (d. 1616). A large army was needed to drive out the Polish invaders and for the upkeep of such an army a great deal of money was required. Minin exhorted the people, "Do not spare anything, we must not hesitate to sell our houses, hire out our wives and children and gather in money for wages to pay the soldiers." From all parts of the country men brought Minin money, valuables and produce. The people sacrificed their last possessions. Many cities sent armed detachments in answer to Minin's appeal, and soon a large popular army was mustered.

The experienced commander Prince Dmitry Pozharsky (c. 1578-1642) was chosen to lead the army. The administrative side of the campaign and the treasury were in the hands of Minin. In 1612 the Russian forces marched to Yaroslavl, where they were joined by forces from other towns.

Soon alarming news reached Minin and Pozharsky. Large detachments of Poles well supplied with arms and victuals and led by hetman Chodkiewicz set out to help the Poles in Moscow. At this news Minin and Pozharsky led their men to Moscow as fast as possible.

There were many peasant and Cossack detachments camped near Moscow at that time since numerous peasant uprisings were still in progress. At first these peasants were unwilling to have anything to do with Pozharsky's men; part of them moved further afield from Moscow, but the rest eventually joined the common campaign against the foreign invaders. These reinforcements decided the outcome of the struggle. Chodkiewicz was beaten back and the Poles encamped in Moscow then had no one to turn to. Minin and Pozharsky's army laid siege to Moscow. At the end of November the Poles were defeated once and for all and driven out of the city. Such was the ignominious conclusion of their sally into Russia, where they were defeated by the concerted efforts of the common people.

Chapter Eleven

ASIA IN THE SIXTEENTH-SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES

India

The main states which took shape on the Indian peninsula in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were the Moslem Empire of the Great Moguls in the north and the Hindu Empire of the Vijayanagar in the south. Each of these empires consisted of a number of individual princedoms and had its own political centre. Despite the heterogeneous ethnic and religious composition of these princedoms they were linked by a common economic and social structure.

These two empires followed different courses of economic development. In the south trading cities flourished. The original communes gradually disintegrated, giving way to an infinite number of tiny feudal estates the owners of which hired out strips of land to the peasants on quite crippling terms. The property of these petty landowners was regarded as a form of payment for military service from the sovereign, the supreme landowner. Exceptions in the overall system of state ownership of land were the large estates belonging to the temples and the small and medium-sized estates belonging to members of the Brahmin caste. The absence of universal private ownership of land and the retention of the princes' privileges, despite the existence of strong state power and a well-developed administrative apparatus, were to determine the history of the Vijayanagar Empire. By the end of the sixteenth century the gradual disintegration of the empire had run its course.

Events took a very different turn in northern India. Here the constant danger of war and the need to maintain large irrigation systems led to the consolidation of strong central government. This was also important as far as the towns were concerned, since they depended for their livelihood on internal trade. It was in the north that the largest, most advanced and centralised state of mediaeval India was to take shape—the Empire of the Great Moguls. A

factor which was to play an important part in the development of this empire was the setting up of new overland trade routes in the sixteenth century, once the Portuguese pirates had established their ascendancy on the sea. Equally important was the need to consolidate the rule of the Moslem rulers in a country where the mass of the population adhered to the Hindu faith and where Hindu rulers outnumbered the Moslem ones.

The Mogul Empire

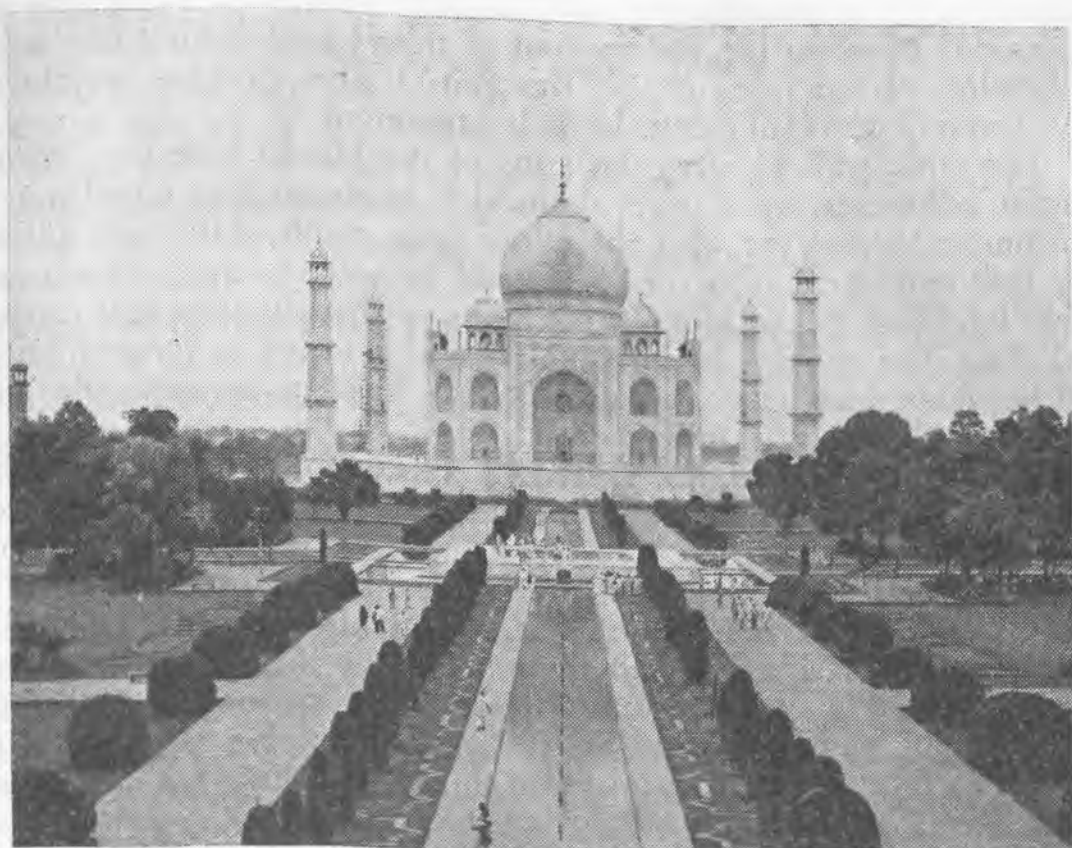
These conditions enabled the ruler and talented military commander Kabul Babur to achieve considerable successes in his efforts to centralise the empire. Babur succeeded in breaking down the resistance of both Moslem and Hindu princes in northern India, and founded a state which came to be known in Europe as the Mogul Empire (1526).

Babur did not live long enough to create a strong state apparatus and a streamlined system of economic exploitation: this was carried out by the energetic ruler Sher Shah (1539-1545). All those engaged in agriculture were directly dependent on the state; each peasant had to pay the state a fixed tax-rent. In Sher Shah's reign a number of internal customs duties were lifted, the coinage system was improved, important roads were built and a complex centralised administration network was set up. Landowners in the emperor's service were subjected to state supervision and their ranks became much more closely knit as social differences between Moslems and Hindus lessened.

The consolidation of the class of landowners and the establishment of a clearly-defined administrative system enabled the Moguls to start working towards the unification of the whole of India. The necessary historical and cultural unity already existed and differences of language and economic development now played a less significant role than had once been the case. Akbar (1556-1605) ruled over the whole of northern India and the northern half of southern India.

As a result of these conquests a hybrid class of feudal lords grew up, which consisted of representatives of both the conquering and subject peoples, of Moslems and Hindus. The state policy aimed at consolidating central power won wide support among the lesser members of this class regardless of their religious beliefs; the most loyal supporters of Mogul rule among them were the Rajputs who were Hindus. The traders from the towns of northern India were also in favour of unification.

Unification considerably furthered economic progress. The introduction of a fixed tax-rent led to a definite advance in the



The Taj Mahal. First half of the seventeenth century

development of the peasant holdings and that of urban and village handicrafts. In the villages the peasant communes virtually disappeared; throughout the country two new groups emerged to replace them, a prosperous minority and a class of landless peasants working land hired out to them. However, the disappearance of the commune traditions was a relatively slow process which took place as items produced by craftsmen in the towns gradually flowed into the villages and came to replace the work of the commune craftsmen.

The development of the large cities of northern India depended to a large extent on whether they were administrative centres or not. Feudal lords gathered in the administrative centres bringing their suites and servants with them, and most important of all their custom, which fostered the growth of trade. Almost everywhere urban crafts attained a high level of perfection and the social patterns of urban administration gradually came to resemble those of self-government.

The townspeople frequently came out in protest against caste canons of social inequality. The most important of the religious movements advocating reform was the Bhakti movement which upheld the idea of equality before God and the decisive role of

personal effort in the redemption of man's soul (which implied a negation of the role of the Brahmin). The Bhaktas employed exclusively peaceful means in their campaign.

Far more radical were the aims of the Hindu Sikh sect, whose main adherents were once again rich town dwellers unwilling to reconcile themselves with their low caste status. Although initially this movement also confined itself to non-violent methods and was tolerated by the Moguls, the Sikhs eventually went still further in their demands for social equality and resorted to force. Similar movements also grew up among the Moslem townspeople (for example the Mahdist movement).

In the first half of the sixteenth century the Mahdists, who preached the imminent dawn of the kingdom of justice and economic equality, resorted to active protest, relying on the support of the urban poor. However, they were soon suppressed.

The reform movements of this period also spread to the villages, the most significant of them being the Roshanite movement among the Afghani peasants. Unlike the Sikhs or the Mahdists, the Roshanites rose up against the upper feudal stratum of Afghani society in an effort to retain the communes. This movement was finally quelled only in the seventeenth century.

In this period of great internal unrest the feudal government introduced a number of reforms which to a certain extent stopped the opposition movements resorting to armed struggle. These reforms ensured more uniform methods of labour exploitation, the consolidation of feudal patterns of landownership and a centralised state apparatus. A fixed individual tax-rent to be paid in money was established throughout the country. Initially this made life easier for the peasants; however, the enormous taxation bodies which the state had recently created made it possible to introduce more severe taxes and this, combined with the fact that they had to be paid in money, soon led to mass impoverishment of the peasantry. This in its turn was eventually to undermine the might of the Mogul Empire since the state, which owned the land, was unable to gather in a large part of the taxes from the now poverty-stricken peasants.

In the second half of the sixteenth century the feudal lords in state service were deprived of a large number of their rights to direct exploitation of the peasants, from whom tax-rents were gathered by official tax-collectors of the central government. The system of conditional landownership in Mogul India of that period made it practically impossible for such estates to eventually become permanent property. This system led to bitter resentment among the feudal lords, who did not however resort to open revolt until an attempt was made to substitute salaries for the revenue they derived from the land. This last measure, quite inappropriate

at that stage of India's economic development was revoked, but conditional landownership remained in force. At the same time Hindus and Moslems were granted equal rights and a short-lived attempt was made to introduce a universal religion. All these measures served to unite the ranks of the feudal lords, leading to a worsening of the peasants' lot.

All this, in turn, served to weaken the power of both the state machinery and the armed forces. This weakness was clearly reflected in relations with European powers. Portuguese traders succeeded in gaining strong footholds in a number of coastal towns while English, Dutch and French merchant companies also set up fortified trading posts in various parts of the country.

China in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries

China developed slowly under the Ming dynasty.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century the system of peasant allotments, which emerged at the same time as state ownership of land was established, began to break up. New landowners in state service, powerful feudal lords and the emperors themselves set up new estates and in order to extend the arable land in their possession, drove the peasants from their holdings, later taking them into the service under crippling conditions. Land hunger obliged the peasants to become tenant farmers paying rent to the landowners and taxes to the state. For the land still in their possession outside the estates of the large landowners the peasants also paid taxes. Landowners of small and moderate means were also liable for taxation. A large part of these taxes had to be paid in money and usury became deep-rooted in rural life. These developments were to start spreading on a large scale only at the beginning of the sixteenth century, and during the first 150 years of the Ming period the internal affairs of the country were relatively calm. Uprisings occurred predominantly among minority (non-Han) peoples, who were subjected to particularly cruel oppression.

The development of commodity-money relations in the villages and the increasing power of money-lenders was accompanied by the growth of peasant home industries, craft guilds in both towns and villages, state-owned industry and manufactories. Firearms were produced and the first newspapers appeared during this period. The first long voyages to foreign lands were undertaken by Chinese seamen. In the sixteenth century Europeans made their way to the Chinese Empire and European culture started to gain a foothold in China.

The foreign policy of the Ming rulers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was of a defensive character and in many



Carved pillars in the city of Chu'u-Fou. Shantung province. Sixteenth century

respects was reminiscent of that pursued by the Sung rulers. There were repeated Mongol invasions from the north, Japanese attacks from the east, and at the beginning of the seventeenth century the Manchurians started to sally forth into China from the north-east.

The situation soon became extremely dangerous, but the conflict between representatives of various groupings in the ruling class hindered the pursuance of any active counter-measures. Another factor complicating the situation was the growing resistance on the part of the peasants to increasing exploitation.

The administrative officials in the lower and middle ranks of the state bureaucratic apparatus came out against the powerful landowners and irresponsible cliques of eunuch courtiers. However, their attempts to rebel (undertaken by the Tung-lin party and other groups) in 1567, 1620, 1628 ended in failure. At that time there were no large-scale popular uprisings and consequently the need for reform did not make itself urgently felt. Nor did the reformers themselves look to the masses for support, preferring to pin their hopes on the good-will of the emperor. Individual emperors did introduce various reforms proposed by the lower and middle ranks of the landowning class; however, these efforts were ineffective, although reforms were already called for by the 1630s when internal conflict was rife and there was a mounting tide of peasant unrest.

Peasant War in China

In 1628, soon after yet another reforming emperor had failed to restrict the power of the landowners, isolated peasant uprisings started to develop into a large-scale war. The rallying of various peasant bands was made easier since a large body of government forces at that time was engaged in warding off Manchurian attacks on the northern border. By 1636 the uprising had taken on such dimensions that the landowners in the emperor's retinue were obliged to change their approach to the peasant question. While cruelly repressing the rebellions where possible, at the same time they were also obliged to make various concessions. However, in 1639 the rebellion spread with even greater momentum than before. Under the command of Li Tzu-ch'eng the insurgents defeated the imperial army and seized the capital, proclaiming Li Tzu-ch'eng Emperor.

In contrast to peasant movements of earlier periods the rebellion of 1639-1644 resulted in the setting up of a system of centralised state administration for both military and civil affairs and serious attempts were made by the peasant government to regulate the country's economy. The insurgents were soon in control of the whole of the lower and central parts of the Yellow River valley.

The population south of the Yangtze took little part in the uprising (nor was the South a bastion of the imperial army and the nobles' retainers). The powerful nobles pinned their hopes on the army of Wu Sang Hui which was then stationed on the northern border, warding off Manchurian attacks.

Fearing to rely on their own strength, the Chinese nobles with Wu Sang Hui at their head betrayed the interests of their country for the sake of preserving their privileges and resorted to forming an alliance with the Manchurians to break the new peasant rule. The united forces of Wu Sang Hui and the Manchurians succeeded in driving the insurgents from the capital and its environs. After the Manchurians entered the capital they declared their leader Emperor of China. South of the river Yangtze the Chinese nobles proclaimed another member of the Ming dynasty Emperor. The peasant insurgents continued their resistance but their strength was already on the wane. After Li Tzu-ch'eng and his men had suffered a number of defeats, the state administrative apparatus and the army of the peasant rulers collapsed and the vacillating townspeople and petty landowners deserted the insurgent camp. In 1645 Li Tzu-ch'eng was killed. His death marked the beginning of an era of feudal reaction and oppressive Manchurian rule.

South-East Asia in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries

By the beginning of the sixteenth century the states of the majority of the larger peoples of this area had come to occupy roughly the same territory as today. This applied to the Indonesians, Vietnamese, Khmers, Burmese, Thai and Laotians. In the Philippines and Malaya no states with definite centres had as yet emerged, and constant feuds raged between petty princes.

The majority of the states of South-East Asia were of an advanced feudal variety. In all of them land was owned by the state, a feudal bureaucracy existed and a landowning class was taking shape. Typical features of these states were the continued presence of well-established communes and the practices that went with them, all-important irrigation systems, the absence of large centralised empires and a single cultural, economic and military centre.

These feudal states can be divided into three types. The first included advanced feudal states such as Vietnam and Central Indonesia where well-developed agriculture over a limited area led to rural overpopulation and the emergence of complicated types of feudal exploitation. Military campaigns led by the monarchs of these states resulted in annexations, partial settlement of new lands and frequent assimilation of conquered peoples.

The second type were equally close-knit feudal states such as Cambodia or Siam, where there were large tracts of uncultivated land and as a result bond peasants represented a valuable source of wealth. Wars in these lands tended to be waged over peasants, who were carried off in hundreds of thousands, rather than over land and state ownership of land was less undermined by the spread of landed estates.

The third group included the Burmese state of Ava, the Laotian state of Lan Xang, the sultanates of the Philippines and the Malaccan peninsula and those of western Malaya. In most of these states state administration was still run by groups of feudal lords descended from tribal leaders, feudal patterns of agriculture were not particularly advanced and a large part of the population still lived mainly in accordance with tribal custom.

The State of Daiviet

Among these states those which had reached the highest stage of economic development were the Vietnamese state of Daiviet and the Indonesian state of Majapahit. In the thirteenth century Daiviet succeeded in warding off three Mongolian invasions. Reforms introduced at the end of the fourteenth and beginning of the fifteenth century firmly established state ownership of land and the role of the lesser and middle echelons of the bureaucracy. The fifteenth century was marked by rapid economic and cultural development in the centralised Vietnamese state and considerable territorial expansion to the south and west. In the sixteenth century, commune agriculture started to disintegrate, giving way to small and medium-sized estates belonging to the warlords. At the end of the sixteenth and in the first half of the seventeenth century the central power and the power of the bureaucrats who received remuneration for their services gradually weakened. The seventeenth century saw the emergence of two main centres in Daiviet, one in the north and the other in the south. After a long struggle the country was divided into two fairly centralised states which remained independent under the nominal power of the Lê dynasty.

The Majapahit Empire

The history of Indonesia took a very different course. This state grew up centred round the island of Java, where the Majapahit Empire had been established since the end of the thirteenth century (from 1293 to approximately the second decade of the sixteenth century).

The formation of a united state incorporating most of Indonesia and centred on Java was facilitated both by the rapid development of trade and cultural links between the various Indonesian islands and also by the fact that Java became the source of rice for many of the other islands which in their turn produced crops mainly for export. Java maintained a united empire firstly by setting up political and dynastic links between the various parts of the empire, and later by the successful military subjection of all other states within the archipelago.

In the course of these developments a talented statesman, Gadjah Mada, came to the fore who was to become the virtual ruler of the Majapahit Empire from 1328 to 1364. After a series of long wars he succeeded in implementing a unification policy in the interests of the feudal lords of Java. He conquered Western Java, part of the Sumatran coast, the southern part of the Malaccan peninsula, the Bangka and Mentawai islands, the northern and southern coasts of Kalimantan, the Banda islands, the Moluccas and other islands. In all these areas the feudal leaders became vassals of the Majapahit Empire. The emergence of feudal patterns of agriculture led to precise division of the land into communal, temple, bestowed or private lands (in the case of the more powerful nobles). Among the class of feudal lords there soon emerged a group of powerful landowners who occupied important posts at court and who were generally related to the ruler, while on the other hand there also existed a large host of landowners whose property was granted them in return for service to the state. The large central state apparatus was designed to ensure strict supervision of the distribution of landed property which was the state's main source of income. Instruments of coercion such as the law courts or the police service were carefully organised and equipped with elaborate systems of rules and a detailed code of laws.

The fourteenth century was one of war and reforms, which saw the final flowering of mediaeval Indonesian culture. The great epic poem *Negarakartagama* dates from this period, which also produced a number of other masterpieces and impressive temple buildings. By this time Indian cultural influences were starting to decline although traces of the caste system were still to be found in the laws of that period.

In the mid-fifteenth century the Moslem coastal princedoms of the Malaccan peninsula and Sumatra grew more independent and came to constitute a threat to Majapahit foreign trade. By the end of the fifteenth century the Majapahit Empire was bereft of all its island possessions and the northern part of Java. In the second decade of the sixteenth century the remnants of the former empire were in the hands of the coalition of trading principalities

of northern Java. Soon new hostilities broke out as the sultanate of Mataram attempted to set up a new centralised state but these attempts were obstructed and later rendered quite fruitless by the arrival of the Europeans.

Portuguese Conquests

In 1511 Malacca was conquered by the Portuguese, who started to contend the control of the trade routes in this part of the world with Arab and Indonesian merchants. The Portuguese succeeded in establishing a stronghold in the Molucca Islands, the main source of spices, and a number of other places in Indonesia long before this issue had been finally settled. Portuguese command of the sea routes undermined local trade and led to intensified exploitation of the peasants by the local landowners in an attempt to compensate for their commercial losses. This weakened the power of the Indonesian states but the majority of them nevertheless succeeded in maintaining their independence.

Dutch Territorial Gains

The situation in Indonesia changed after the arrival of Dutch merchants and soldiers of the Netherlands East India Company in 1603. After capturing the Molucca Islands and subjugating the local rajahs, the company built a network of fortresses throughout the whole of Indonesia and gradually gained control of more and more territory. The success of the company was based on unbridled plunder of the islands' natural resources and cruel exploitation of the native population. The Dutch traders made their main bases on the north-western coast of Java where they founded the town of Batavia. Dutch trade thrived in the area and the company gradually expanded its territorial gains. However, by the middle of the seventeenth century the Dutch were still not undisputed masters even of Java, where they were challenged by the strong Mataram and Bantam sultanates.

Japan in the Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries

The Mongolian invasion brought a series of significant changes to life in Japan. The centralised shogunate which relied on the Samurai for its support came to an end. Large landed estates belonging to the leading nobles or *daimyo* predominated. Each of

these powerful landowners ruled over a number of Samurai as his vassals. The political legalisation of this new system was introduced after the victory of the princes from the south-west over the shogun when power passed from the latter into the hands of the house of Ashikaga at the end of the fourteenth century.

During the reign of the Ashikaga dynasty the number of large landed estates gradually decreased and the Samurai who were now dependent on the powerful nobles no longer constituted a united class. The dispossession of the Samurai in the fifteenth century was but one aspect of a general agrarian crisis, the root cause of which was the land shortage, the intensified exploitation of the peasants and feuds between individual princes. Meanwhile, however, urban handicrafts and trade were expanding, control of taxation was put into the hands of leading traders, who also had a monopoly of spirits production. With increasing frequency the landowners were finding themselves in the power of money-lenders and traders. Although the government frequently annulled debts the Japanese nobles did not resort to any drastic measures against the money-lenders, traders and townspeople. Trade flourished, and merchants and craftsmen soon came to enjoy certain privileges—Japan being the only state in the Far East where this was the case. Fine artefacts and copper ore were among Japan's main exports. Many ports were self-governing and had their own city guard. Large profits from the export of gold, silver and copper ore meant that the landowners, well aware of the limited prospects of agriculture, far from harassing the townspeople, themselves started to organise mining projects.

Meanwhile in the villages profits were possible only at the expense of the peasants who were subjected to drastic exploitation: fifty per cent of their harvests had to be handed over to their liege-lords and they were continually at the mercy of money-lenders. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries peasant uprisings were common occurrences and the ranks of the peasants were often swelled by urban craftsmen and dispossessed Samurai. This latter fact meant that the peasant uprisings were well organised, usually being led by distinct religious sects or factions from among the urban poor. At the same time the frequent internecine strife between the nobles led to Japan becoming split into a number of separate princedoms by the middle of the sixteenth century. One of the main reasons behind these petty wars was the need for a redistribution of the land since the existing system no longer corresponded to the actual level of social and economic development. The sixteenth century was a time of endless internal wars accompanied by attempts at territorial expansion in Korea. The Europeans introduced firearms to the Japanese and later initiated them into the secrets of their production. As a result, within a short

space of time the decisive role in military encounters was played by the peasant infantry which ousted the equestrian knights and gradually came to be organised on a professional basis.

Contact with Europe also resulted in the spread of Catholicism which undermined the unity of the Japanese people. Unity had been somewhat tenuous earlier and the growing number of armed peasant detachments, particularly in the south, pointed to the fact that the nobles and the Samurai would be unable to preserve their domination over the other classes without a strong central power. Thus they naturally sought to centralise state power and consolidate Japanese unity.

The nucleus of the new centralised Japan was the central region of the country and the main forces working towards unity were the middle and lower echelons of the landowning class under the leadership of Oda Nobunaga. In the course of a grim struggle lasting from 1568 to 1582 Nobunaga succeeded in setting up a centralised state in the northern half of the country after winning over to his side the merchants from the main towns and suppressing peasant uprisings. Nobunaga's work was continued by Hideyoshi during the period from 1583 to 1598. He launched a campaign to conquer Korea which ended in failure, but was far more successful in suppressing peasant disturbances at home. Hideyoshi tried to solve the land problem by disarming the Japanese peasants and making them serfs.

Increased labour productivity in peasant agriculture made it possible for the landowners to demand 66 per cent of their peasants' harvests as against the former 50 per cent, while the new centralised government was able to disarm the peasants and bind them to their respective holdings. The peasants paid tax-rents to their lords and the collection of these taxes was supervised by the lord's or the shogun's vassals. The stabilisation of the internal situation facilitated expansion of home markets.

The Establishment of the Tokugawa Shogunate

The setting up of a feudal system with peasant farmers bound to the land was completed by the shoguns of the house of Tokugawa, who came to power in 1603. This system was based on centralisation and universal conservative regimentation. It was the Tokugawa who finally put an end to peasant unrest (the largest outbreak was that in Shimabara in 1637), banned Christianity, set limits for political and trading relations with foreign countries and restricted the independent powers of the coastal towns and the nobles in the south. Foreign trade became a state monopoly; the rights and obligations of all social estates (Samu-

rai, farmers, craftsmen and traders) were drawn up in detail and state supreme ownership of land was introduced (but seldom implemented except in the case of confiscation of lands by way of punishment for state treason). The noble landowners had the right to pass sentence on their vassals, to keep armed retainers and collect taxes, but they remained subject to the laws of the shogun and were not allowed to wage war on their neighbours. Seventeen large towns were made directly responsible to the shogun and removed from the sphere of the nobles' jurisdiction. This series of strict regulations affected the traders and craftsmen considerably less than the peasants, since the shogunate sought to encourage trade and crafts rather than obstruct their progress.

The cessation of local feuds and the setting up of a powerful state apparatus to ensure all-pervasive control of the peasants made it possible for the landowners to squeeze the very last drop out of the peasantry, in short, all that was possible at a given stage of economic development. This exploitation was facilitated by the country's isolation from the outside world which meant that the towns concentrated their energies on the home market, which in turn favoured the advance of agricultural production. New instruments of production and technical improvements were introduced and new crops were experimented with, including those brought over from Europe. Commodity-money relations made deep inroads into village life and the era of natural economy was soon a thing of the past. Centralised and scattered manufactories sprang up. Yet, all in all, the economic development of seventeenth-century Japan took place within the framework of a feudal system which the government of the period spared no effort to consolidate.

Part Three

THE MODERN
PERIOD

Chapter One

THE ENGLISH BOURGEOIS REVOLUTION. FEUDAL ABSOLUTISM IN SEVENTEENTH- AND EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY EUROPE

While capitalist features were emerging in feudal production relations, so the wealth and influence of the bourgeoisie as a capitalist class grew. In countries where capitalism developed particularly rapidly the bourgeoisie soon ceased to remain content with the patronage and assistance formerly afforded it by the absolute monarchies of the feudal era. The bourgeoisie came to aspire to power in order to ensure that the whole apparatus of state coercion would serve the interests of capitalism and deprive the feudal lords—whom the capitalists regarded as idle parasites—of the power which they had enjoyed in their position as members of the ruling class in states with an absolute monarchy. Attempts to gain power had been made, as described in earlier chapters, as early as the sixteenth century. Such, essentially, were the Reformation and the Peasant War in Germany. The first successful bourgeois revolution was the revolt of the Netherlands against Spanish rule. In both these countries the crucial issue had been the transfer of power from the hands of the feudal landowners to the bourgeoisie and at the same time the triumph of a new social system, that of capitalism, over the former feudal society—a revolutionary transition from one social order to another, more progressive one.

In the history of Europe, and indeed of the world, a particularly important role was played in this connection by the revolution which took place in England in the middle of the seventeenth century. The growing power of the bourgeoisie and the sections of the nobility with similar interests, together with the liquidation of the last vestiges of feudal patterns of agriculture and industry, made of England by the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a progressive country and major world power with an enormous

number of colonial possessions all being exploited in the interests of the English capitalists, merchants and entrepreneurs and, by the eighteenth century, in the interests of the English factory-owners. It was in England that capitalist society first emerged, before it became a world-wide phenomenon. Hence the English bourgeois revolution was of great significance for the whole course of world history and Soviet Marxist historians regard this event as marking the beginning of modern history, i.e., the history of capitalist society.

Prelude to the English Revolution

As it gradually grew more powerful, the English bourgeoisie came to express its dissatisfaction with the King's absolute power in ever stronger terms. Meanwhile the King and his loyal supporters failed to realise that in face of the successful development of a capitalist economy and the emergence of the bourgeois class feudalism was doomed.

The first Kings of the new Stuart dynasty, James I (1603-1625) and Charles I (1625-1649), strove despite pressure from Parliament to assert their unlimited power as absolute monarchs.

The financial policy pursued by these Kings met with a particularly cold reception.

According to a law passed in the fourteenth century new taxes could only be introduced with the consent of Parliament, and on more than one occasion Parliament refused to approve new taxes. In the reign of Charles I (son of James I) the conflict between Crown and Parliament came to a head. In 1628, Parliament presented a Petition of Right to the King, who dissolved Parliament the following year and did not convene it again for eleven years. Charles' chief counsellor at that time was Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, who advised him to defy Parliament and initiate Personal Rule exercising his royal prerogatives. This would have been possible if it had not been for the fact that the King had neither the right to introduce new taxes without the consent of Parliament nor complete control of the army.

In order to gain control of the army, Charles sent his minion, the Earl of Strafford, to Ireland as Lord Deputy in 1631, with the task of mustering an army there on the pretext of quelling an Irish revolt.

In an attempt to raise money, in 1635 Charles reintroduced ship money, a tax which had been decreed before Parliament had come into being when money was demanded from the inhabitants of the coastal countries to help ward off the attacks of the Normans; the King also tried to levy other taxes but met with sharp opposition from Parliament.

In 1631 a rebellion broke out in Scotland in answer to Charles' attempt to extend English absolutism to that part of the realm as well, and introduce the Church of England there, which was loyal to the Crown, whereas by that time Calvinism in its Scottish form, Presbyterianism, had taken root in Scotland.

From the very beginning of the rebellion the situation looked extremely grave for King Charles. He was short of money and had no army at his disposal and was thus obliged to convene Parliament. In April 1640 Parliament was convened after an interval of eleven years: however, not only did the new Parliament refuse to give the King any money but it continued to advance major demands aimed at curbing royal power and even entered into secret negotiations with the Scots. The King dissolved Parliament once more after no more than a few weeks had elapsed and this Parliament as a result came to be known as the Short Parliament.

The King meanwhile was still short of funds and the rebellion was gaining ground, so that in November of that same year Charles was obliged to convene Parliament once more. This time he faced still tougher opposition than before. Well aware of the King's difficult position Parliament firmly insisted on his complying with its demands.

The walls of London were soon covered with revolutionary slogans and the government was afraid to dissolve Parliament, which indeed was destined to become the Parliament of the English bourgeois revolution. It came to be known as the Long Parliament as it was not dissolved for twelve years.

Parliament succeeded in condemning the Earl Strafford by act of attainder and he was sentenced to death as a traitor. Not long afterwards a similar fate was to befall another champion of absolutism Archbishop Laud. Parliament abolished the prerogative courts and the King's right to raise ship money, reasserted its right to control the levy of taxes and in November 1641 forced through the "Grand Remonstrance", which listed the unlawful acts of the King and demanded that all important posts in the realm should be occupied by "such as henceforth the Parliament may have cause to confide in".

Enraged at this the King appeared in Parliament and ordered the arrest of the leaders of the opposition, but they had already gone into hiding in the City (the leading trading houses and banks belonging to the bourgeoisie were situated in the City and it was firmly in support of the opposition). Unrest broke out in the town. Large bands of sailors came up from the docks to defend the leaders of the opposition. In January 1642 the King left London for the north-west and started to muster his loyal followers. In August he declared war on Parliament.

The Commencement of the Revolution

The feudal landowners of the economically backward North-West rallied to the Crown. The more developed South-East and London, the bourgeoisie and the part of the nobility with similar interests supported Parliament. From the outset of the Great Rebellion the Navy was on the side of Parliament and this served to protect England from interference on the part of absolute monarchies on the continent. The Church of England supported the King, while the Puritans were staunch supporters of Parliament and the names of the various groupings of the period were derived from different trends in the Protestant movement.

The party of the rich bourgeoisie which played the leading role in Parliament was known as that of the Presbyterians who favoured a united Calvinist Church administered by a council of church elders. The party of the lesser nobility and the bourgeoisie were the Independents, who favoured the religious independence of every church congregation. When the war started the King had the upper hand. The landowners who fought on his side were professional fighting men and their cavalry was disciplined and experienced. The forces mustered by Parliament, on the other hand, were insufficiently organised and poorly armed. Apart from this, the commanders in the parliamentary army were mainly from the class of lesser landowners and waged the campaign with little zeal, reckoning all the while with a speedy reconciliation with the King. The Presbyterians in Parliament, who made up the majority, were also reckoning with such a reconciliation.

Parliament's indecisive policy and the setbacks suffered by its army gave rise to dissatisfaction in the radical sections of English society, who were soon to close their ranks and rally to the support of the Independents. The Independents were led by Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658), a farmer of moderate means, who mustered a cavalry army which included peasants, craftsmen and various representatives of the lesser bourgeoisie alongside the stern and ardent adherents of Calvinism—the Independents. The iron discipline which reigned in Cromwell's cavalry (his men came to be referred to as "Ironsides") succeeded in gaining the first victory over the King at Marston Moor in July 1644. After this Cromwell was permitted by Parliament to reform the army as a whole and his New Model Army delivered the final blow to the King's cause at the battle of Naseby in 1645. Many prisoners were taken, and all the Royalists' artillery, a large part of their other arms and the King's diplomatic correspondence were seized. It emerged from the latter that while the King had been carrying on negotiations with Parliament for an armistice, he had also been corresponding with European governments asking for their help, and in letters to his

friends had written of the cruel punishments, which he would mete out to the "rebels" if his cause proved victorious. These letters were published and aroused universal indignation. The King's authority suffered a severe blow as a result.

After the battle of Naseby Charles suffered a number of further defeats. By March 1646 almost all the Royalist strongholds had surrendered, army and the King fled to Scotland. However, the Scots, who had received 400,000 pounds for the help that their troops had shown Cromwell's army, handed the King over to the English in January 1647.

While the war was being conducted Parliament introduced various reforms directed towards the partial liquidation of feudal practices. Part of the Crown and Church lands, and lands belonging to the King's supporters were confiscated and sold. The abolition of manorial estates in 1646 was also to have far-reaching consequences. All obligations connected with these estates were abolished and lands belonging to the nobility now became the property of the gentry. However, while gentry property was made free of all vestiges of feudal vassalage, the peasants' plots remained subject to the former conditions: the peasants still had to pay all manner of taxes and labour-services to the lords and thus gained nothing from the revolution. The Great Rebellion consisted of a contest between the bourgeoisie in alliance with the country gentry against the monarchy, powerful lords and the established Church.

The Second Civil War

After the King had been handed over to the army as a prisoner, the Presbyterians in Parliament considered that the revolution was over and were ready to negotiate a peace with the King. However, the revolutionary ardour of the popular masses who had gained nothing from the five years' war had in no way been calmed. The common soldiers in the army chose to fight on and a new party known as the Levellers came into being, led by John Lilburne (1618-1657), who demanded universal suffrage, the abolition of the monarchy and the return of enclosed land to the peasants. Political power was soon in the hands of the army and Parliament decided to disband it on the pretext that the war was over. This decree gave rise to indignation in the army and the regiments proceeded to elect their representatives—Agitators—to form councils of soldiers' representatives who demanded decisive action from the Grands (as the officers or the Independent military leaders were known among the common soldiers). In order to keep the soldiers under control Cromwell set up the General Army

Council, in which soldiers were under the surveillance of their officers. Soon afterwards the army occupied London and had the country virtually in its hands.

However class conflict was now to break out in the army. The officers and Levellers could not agree on the nature of the future political structure of the state to be adopted. The Grands were wary of universal suffrage, claiming that the poor might seize power and do away with private property.

These conflicting interests soon led to a revolt of the Levellers and common soldiers. Cromwell put down the revolt and disbanded the Army Council, leaving only the council of officers.

Counter-revolutionary elements now came to the fore, making currency out of the clash of interests in the army. Presbyterians in Parliament came to terms with the Royalists and the King succeeded in escaping and taking refuge among the Scottish lords who mustered an army of twenty thousand men and marched into England to confront Cromwell's army.

Well aware of the dangerous situation, the Grands and the Levellers closed their ranks once more and Cromwell's army succeeded in defeating the Scots. The King was arrested and called to account for all the bloodshed perpetrated on his orders, and the injury he had brought to God's cause and the poor English nation. The army removed the Presbyterians from Parliament and the Independents who remained in office sentenced the King to death for High Treason. On January 30th, 1649, the King was beheaded and England was proclaimed a Republic without a King or House of Lords.

In 1653 Cromwell dissolved what was left of the Long Parliament and in 1654 he was proclaimed Lord Protector of the Republic, thus becoming sole ruler of England. While he was in power he dealt quite ruthlessly both with Leveller and Royalist oppositions. He put down revolts in Ireland and Scotland and declared these countries part of the English state for all time (1654). Cromwell also gained a number of successes in the sphere of foreign policy. After routing England's main trade rival Holland and obliging her to acknowledge the Navigation Act which had been drawn up in 1651 and according to which goods to be sold in England could be brought to English shores only by English ships or those of the country producing the goods in question. This dealt a disastrous blow to Dutch trade. Cromwell seized the island of Jamaica from Spain, which was then the centre of the slave-trade, and Dunkirk in the Spanish Netherlands.

In 1658 Cromwell died at the height of his power. However, the bourgeoisie, the new ruling class, fearing a new wave of revolution and the involvement of the broad masses of the people soon restored the monarchy in the person of Charles II (1660-1685),



Cromwell dissolving Long Parliament. Seventeenth-century engraving

followed by James II (1685-1688). When these last Stuart Kings tried to revert to the policies of their predecessors, the bourgeoisie drove the dynasty out once and for all in what was known as the Glorious Revolution, when without any bloodshed William of Orange and his consort Mary, close relatives of Stuarts, were invited to ascend the throne. This event marked the final victory of Parliament, which provided a more realistic reflection of the balance of class interests in the country than Stuart absolutism.

The English revolution did away with the last vestiges of feudalism and a new monarchy took shape whose powers were limited by Parliament. The essence of this parliamentary system consisted in the country being ruled by the party receiving the majority of votes in parliamentary elections. Ministers were appointed from among the leaders of the majority party and the government was responsible to Parliament. This meant that if the government was not accorded the support of Parliament then it would be obliged to relinquish power. However, the ruling parties in Parliament did not stand for the people's true interests since it was only a small section of the population, men of noble birth or ample means who enjoyed the right to vote.

From a small country which in the fifteenth century had had a population of no more than $3\frac{1}{2}$ -4 million and had held sway

neither over Ireland nor Scotland, England had now become a major European power ruling over not only the whole of the British Isles but also vast territories in North America and the whole of India.

In the sixteenth century England secured victories over Spain, over the Dutch in the seventeenth, and over France in the eighteenth. This enhancement of England's power was a direct result of the country's capitalist development.

The English revolution was the first bourgeois revolution with repercussions that were to make themselves felt far beyond its borders and which was to mark a turning point in history. However, much time was still to elapse before a capitalist economy and bourgeois rule were to spread throughout even the whole of Europe.

Absolutism in France

Meanwhile in France, where capitalist elements had appeared as early as the end of the fifteenth century and manufactories had grown up in the sixteenth century, another 150 years were to pass before the advent of bourgeois revolution (1789). The revolution in England took place during the heyday of the absolute monarchy in France, that is the reign of Louis XIV, "le roi soleil" as his contemporaries flatteringly called him.

Louis XIV came to the throne in 1643 when he was only five years old. He took over the reins of government in 1661 and was to rule for more than half a century (1661-1715). "I shall be my own minister", declared the young King, and indeed he was to be an all-powerful ruler, whose will determined the fate of all his subjects, of the whole realm.

For many a long year the saying: "L'état c'est moi", was attributed to Louis XIV and although nowadays the statement is regarded rather as a legend than a fact, this sentiment still provides a vivid reflection of the actual state of affairs in the France of that time. The King and his immediate entourage at court held such power and lived in such luxury that it may well have seemed to them that the life of this big state began and ended with the magnificent halls and chambers of the royal court.

Louis XIV's long reign was referred to as "la grande époque" or "le siècle de Louis le Grand". During his reign a new royal palace was built at Versailles which dwarfed all other royal residences in Europe in its extravagance, luxury and brilliance. Many of the noble courtiers followed the King's example and built themselves magnificent residences and châteaux. During Louis' reign France was to wage incessant wars against Spain, Holland, England, Sweden and Austria, in which French troops secured

many illustrious victories and French commanders earned a great reputation. France under Louis XIV seemed to the whole world to be the most powerful state in Europe.

However, as the years and decades of this "great age" followed one another the common people, the peasants and craftsmen (in short those the fruit of whose labours went to feed and clothe the nobility, clergy, army, court and the King himself) came to realise that their living conditions were growing worse and worse, that the country was becoming impoverished and that each new day brought heavier burdens. Popular risings broke out in various parts of the realm and were only put down with great difficulty: this served to illustrate the real attitude of the French people to Louis le Grand. When the King died in 1715 his funeral had to take place in secret to avoid a major rebellion.

During the reign of Louis XV (1715-1774) the critical state of affairs in this feudal absolutist society grew still more serious. The ruling nobility and, in particular, its upper echelons, i.e., the King and his courtiers, chose to ignore the desperate plight of the war-worn troops, the fact that their lavish expenditure was far beyond the means of the State Treasury, the suffering of the starving peasantry and the discontent of the bourgeoisie, while they gave themselves up to dancing, carousing, costly balls, receptions and hunting. The lavish expenditure at court and at the residences of the greater and lesser nobility, entertainment and all manner of frivolity knew no bounds. No thought was given to the morrow. Louis XV is reputed to have declared: "Après nous le déluge!" The King, his courtiers and the vast majority of the nobility lived their lives according to this code, all hoping they would not outlive the Golden Age.

The only source of income of this parasitic nobility was exploitation of the peasantry and taxation of the bourgeoisie. Rapacious robbery of the peasantry led to its impoverishment and a general crisis in French agriculture. The extremes resorted to with the aim of intensifying the feudal exploitation of the peasantry in the eighteenth century merely meant that the nobility cut the ground away from under their own feet.

The tide of wide-scale discontent mounted apace. The peasants were not only unwilling but indeed unable to go on living as they were. In the course of a whole century, and particularly during the middle and latter half of it, major peasant uprisings had shaken the edifice of the French monarchy. The impoverished working men in the towns had also come out into the streets on several occasions, raiding granaries and food warehouses. The bourgeoisie, which by this time constituted the most educated and economically powerful class was unwilling to reconcile itself either to its lack of rights or to the arbitrary sway of the court and the nobility. All

the exploited and underprivileged classes, the whole of the oppressed third estate, rallied together to oppose the privileged minority.

The Enlightenment

This discontent among the ranks of the bourgeoisie and the popular masses found graphic expression in the philosophical, political, and economic writings and belles lettres of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, a truly Golden Age of French culture.

The writers of the Enlightenment did not represent a united group, and indeed were distinguished by their very diversity. One of the first among them, a simple country priest Jean Meslier (1664-1729), was never to emerge from obscurity. It was only many years after his death that the manuscript of his "Testament" started to be circulated clandestinely. In this work he expressed materialist ideas, criticising the state and feudal oppression.

Unlike Meslier, the Enlighteners of the older generation—Montesquieu (1689-1755) and Voltaire (1694-1778)—won great fame during their life-time. Montesquieu spoke out as a severe and profound critic of despotism and the arbitrary rule of the absolute monarch in his political and philosophical writings *Lettres Persanes* and *De l'esprit des lois*. He held the injustices of despotic France up for comparison with ideals of freedom, above all political freedom. Montesquieu is rightly held to be the father of bourgeois liberalism.

Voltaire, a writer of brilliant irony and wit, was the author of tragedies, verse, historical writings, philosophical novels, satirical poems, political treatises and articles. He was a brave and inveterate enemy of the Church and champion of anti-clericalism, and poured scorn on the morals and dogmas of feudal society, and the lawlessness and vice inherent in absolutism. However, in his constructive programme for reform, as in his attitudes to the common people, he was restrained and moderate. Yet his role in the Enlightenment was enormous and due not so much to his political views as to the free-thinking spirit of inquiry and scepticism with which he inspired the younger generation, thus leading them directly or indirectly towards the path of revolutionary struggle.

Philosophers of this movement included the doctor Julien de La Mettrie (1709-1751), author of the book *L'Homme machine* which caused such a sensation in its day; Denis Diderot (1713-1784), the chief editor and initiator of the famous many-volume *Encyclopédie* and a number of philosophical and political works; Helvétius (1715-1771) who in his book *De l'esprit* criticised religious faith and the Church, and despotism; and D'Holbach (1723-1789), author of the famous *Système de la Nature*. Their materialism still

contained various inconsistencies and was as yet purely of a mechanical variety. Nevertheless, they played an important and positive role in the cultural development of those times fighting against obscurantism and ignorance, boldly propagating progressive new ideas in defiance of established religion and mediaeval doctrines.

The economists Quesnay, Turgot and Du Pont de Nemours, who came to be known as the physiocrats, spoke out in favour of unlimited freedom of economic initiative and enterprise, ideas which corresponded to the interests of the bourgeoisie.

Alongside these writers and Enlighteners, whose writings reflected so clearly the ideology of the young and revolutionary bourgeoisie of that period, were others whose works voiced the aspirations and dreams of the popular masses. The auto-didactic writer Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) was to exert an extremely strong influence on the younger generation, and yet he was obliged to spend his whole life as a homeless impecunious wanderer. Despite the contradictions permeating Rousseau's novels, verse and philosophical and political writings, they were to have a revolutionising effect on his contemporaries. They contained two main ideas which were to make of them such a strong attractive force: the idea of equality, which Rousseau approached not merely as a political but as a social phenomenon, and the idea of the people's power. His dream of the ideal republic where equality reigns, an egalitarian republic of petty producers, property-owners unacquainted with poverty or wealth was of course unrealistic, but it reflected the age-long aspirations of the peasantry, desperate for the land which had been taken away from it by the feudal lords, the dreams of the working people of another more just society of which they themselves were as yet only dimly aware.

The ill-defined social aspirations of the poorest strata of society of those times also found expression in the writings of the Utopian communists: Morelly, author of a treatise entitled *Le Code de la Nature*, and the Abbé de Mably, author of numerous political works. Both Mably and Morelly subjected the whole of the social system based on private property to harsh criticism. But this ideal "natural" communist order—the Golden Age of mankind—was seen by them to be bound up with the advance of enlightenment.

Despite this diversity of expression the ideas of the men of the Enlightenment had in common a bold resolution in subjecting to merciless criticism all social institutions, dogmas and canons of the already obsolete feudal society of the age of absolutism. This ideological barrage was to precede the direct revolutionary onslaught of the masses.

The Enlightenment played a still more dramatic role in France during the eighteenth century, by which time it was no longer a

strictly French phenomenon, but a movement embracing the whole of Europe—Germany, Russia, Italy and Spain, in short all those countries where the struggle against the feudal absolutism standing in the way of progress was underway.

The Monarchies of Eastern Europe

While in France capitalist development was at least progressing, if at a much slower pace than in England, in Eastern Europe the feudal mode of production and feudal states were still deeply entrenched and revolutionary ideas even at the time of the French Revolution were to produce little echo there. In contrast to developments in England, here the capitalist developments taking place in the progressive countries of Europe were to give rise to a wave of feudal reaction. In the North-East and South-East of the continent two large states arose—Prussia and Austria, whose economies were based on the agricultural enterprise of the nobility relying on the labour services of peasants bound to their land. This involved a return to the very earliest forms of feudal exploitation, explained by the fact that the European countries to the East of the Elbe became the source of agricultural produce for the markets of Western Europe, where capitalism was already taking root. Prussian, Polish and Austrian landowners drove peasants from their former holdings, extended their lands under the plough, making use of the peasants' obligatory labour services and binding the latter to their estates once and for all and depriving them of all personal freedom. They sold their produce wholesale in the West and thus grew rich on the proceeds and entrenched their position as the privileged section of society. These states represented a bastion of feudalism and reaction in Eastern Europe, and waged continual aggressive wars. For this purpose they kept expanding their armies, which were commanded by members of the nobility (in Prussia by the Junkers) brought up in an atmosphere shaped by centuries of hostilities against the peoples of Eastern Europe, some of whom they succeeded in subduing and bringing to their knees. Expanding their territory at the expense of the petty German states, Prussian and Austrian interests soon clashed as both attempted to unify Germany under their hegemony. Neither succeeded in this venture and no further attempts were made until the nineteenth century.

Poland was a special case. Here, as in Prussia, an agriculture based on peasants' labour services had grown up and few of the towns had become industrial centres of any importance. Furthermore, the townspeople in their economic activity showed themselves to be closely dependent on the existing agricultural system

and supported the Polish nobles and the reactionary feudal order from both political as well as economic considerations. The defiant political independence of the Polish nobles meant that Poland was only formally a monarchy while in practice each large landed estate was virtually an independent entity and the country was more like a republic than a monarchy. All affairs of state were decided by the Sejms (councils of elected representatives of the nobility) while all Polish nobles had the right to reject the Sejms' decrees and even use armed force against the existing order. In conditions such as these the state could not hope to preserve its unity and at the end of the eighteenth century it ceased to exist, being partitioned by Austria, Prussia and Russia.

Chapter Two

ABSOLUTISM IN RUSSIA

Changes in the Russian Economy in the Seventeenth Century. The Development of Internal Trade

Although seventeenth-century Russia was still a feudal state, certain changes had begun to take place in her economy. New lands were being cultivated: the southern steppes in the area of the Don were gradually being settled, Russian peasants were making inroads in the steppes of Bashkiria, while peasants from the north were farming in Siberia beyond the Urals. As the burden of serfdom increased in the central provinces, so the exodus of peasants to the country's borderlands gained momentum.

Towns and industrial regions were also developing. Salt-mining in the north was being stepped up and sometimes thousands of hired workers were employed in the mines. The number of craftsmen also grew rapidly and trade flourished accordingly. Craftsmen started producing goods for sale on the market rather than merely to order as before.

An extremely important feature of Russia's economic development at this period was the appearance of comparatively large industrial enterprises—manufactories. These were more than mere workshops, they were sizable undertakings where a large number of workmen used hand-driven machines and labour was rationally divided. This meant that the work performed was more rapid and productive.

The very first of the Russian manufactories was the Moscow cannon foundry, set up at the end of the fifteenth century. Cast-iron foundries, and iron and copper-smelting plants were opened. The first iron works were built near Tula and Kaluga. There were, it is true, only a few of these manufactories, but they nevertheless bore witness to new trends in the country's industrial development.

Yet in the main the country's economy was still a natural one: all the most important wares were produced on the individual

landed estates rather than bought at markets. Nevertheless, a new development was making itself felt, namely the steadily increasing number of people engaged in buying and selling. The peasants used to sell the wares they produced in order to gain money to supply their own holdings with the necessary seeds and implements, etc., and so as to be able to pay taxes to their masters. Meanwhile the craftsmen, whose ranks were steadily swelling, came to the markets to sell their wares and buy agricultural produce. Hired workmen also frequented the markets to buy food, clothes and footwear with the money they had earned.

In the seventeenth century trade started to make headway and develop as it gradually became a more advantageous undertaking. The landowners sold their surplus produce, gained through the receipt of taxes in kind, at local markets. As soon as the roads became passable at the beginning of winter, sleighs drove out from the landowners' houses loaded with grain, linen, lard and skins heading for the towns and the markets there. It was in the towns that trade was concentrated. Moscow, Archangel, Nizhny Novgorod and Vologda were all major trading centres. Caviare, salt and salted fish from Astrakhan, canvas and linen from Novgorod, Yaroslavl and Kostroma, leather and lard from Kazan, woodwork and butter from Vologda and furs from Siberia were sold in towns throughout the country and in some cases exported as well. Grain was traded everywhere. In Novgorod on big market days as many as 1,000 cartloads of grain were sometimes sold in a day. These trade ties helped to consolidate the country as an economic whole. Gradually a national market came into being.

Foreign trade also made great strides at this time. For England, Sweden and Holland, Russia was the gateway to the East—to Persia, and the riches of India. The main port for the export trade was Archangel. The trade route between Scandinavia and the East was along the Northern Dvina and other rivers as far as Vologda, then overland to the Volga and down it to Astrakhan. From the East came silk, rare fabrics, spices, dyes, costly pottery, jewellery and carpets. Russia also exported many goods, such as furs, leather, wax, honey, potash and resin, while imports included fabrics, jewellery, guns, cannon, pistols, wines and sugar. The vast majority of wares which circulated on the Russian market were still those produced on the individual landed estates, which the landowners gained from the peasants either in the form of taxes in kind (*obrok*) or as a result of the labour services carried out by the peasants on their land (*barshchina*).

In order to gain more and more advantage for themselves from the peasants' labour the landowners intensified their oppression of the serfs. They could be sure of the Tsar's support in this, and the latter issued decrees binding the peasants to their masters' land

and service. A new code of laws or *Ulozhenie* introduced by Tsar Alexei in 1649 laid the final seal on this bondage, forbidding the peasants once and for all to leave their masters' estates. The bailiffs on the estates belonging to boyars and the *dvoryane* (the gentry) made quite sure that all arrears in tax payments were paid and carefully supervised the peasants' work. Misdemeanours or negligence were punished by the stick, whip, cudgel and incarceration in the landowners' prison cells, and enforced starvation.

The Emergence of an Absolute Monarchy

After suppressing the peasant war at the beginning of the seventeenth century the *dvoryane* established an absolute monarchy—this social feudal structure helped to ensure that policies favourable to their interests were pursued. The Romanov dynasty elected to the throne in 1613 was to continue ruling Russia right up to the February Revolution of 1917.

Once the Polish usurpers had been driven out of Moscow in 1613 boyars from all towns of Russia assembled in Moscow together with representatives of the clergy, landowners and merchants in order to elect a new Tsar and the Zemsky Sobor (land assembly) was convened. It goes without saying, of course, that the peasants took no part in these proceedings. Mikhail Romanov was elected Tsar, since this protégé of the boyars was regarded at that particular juncture as a suitable candidate by the *dvoryane*, the traders and the Cossacks. The *dvoryane* hoped to enhance their influence in state affairs by having a young inexperienced and none too sharp-witted 16-year-old on the throne.

Mikhail's father Patriarch Philaret was at that time a prisoner of the Poles. (During the reign of Fyodor Ivanovich, Ivan the Terrible's son, Russia began to have her own independent Patriarchs.) Soon Philaret was to return to Moscow and start to rule together with his son Mikhail and it was he who was to play the leading role in the affairs of state.

Meanwhile peasant rebellions continued to break out in various parts of the country. Mikhail and Philaret meted out cruel punishment to the instigators of the last isolated outbreaks of the peasant revolt.

The reconstituted Russian state was faced by extremely unfavourable conditions when it came to restoring its territorial integrity. At that time Sweden was still in control of lands that it had seized during the Time of Troubles in the Novgorod provinces, while Poland ruled over Smolensk and the western part of the Russian state.

War against Sweden restored Novgorod to the Russian state in

1617, but the southern coast of the Gulf of Finland still remained in Swedish hands along with the Russian towns of Yam, Koporye, Ivangorod and Oreshek, depriving Muscovy of an outlet to the sea.

The Union of Russia and the Ukraine

The Polish invaders were eventually driven out of almost all the territories they had occupied. Although Smolensk still remained in their hands the Russian state was restored almost to its former size. An event of outstanding historical importance was the unification of Russia and the Ukraine which took place in the middle of the seventeenth century. The Ukraine and Byelorussia had been part of the original Russian state and Kiev, the present-day capital of the Ukraine, was one of the most ancient cities of Rus.

In the 13th century a large part of the Ukraine was overrun by the Tartars and its inhabitants had to bear the heavy yoke of the Tartar khans. The rest of the Ukraine and the whole of Byelorussia had been seized by the Lithuanian knights. Later Lithuania was to form an alliance with Poland and set up a Polish-Lithuanian state. The Ukraine and Byelorussia became subject provinces, and the Polish, Byelorussian and Lithuanian peasants alike were oppressed by the Polish and Lithuanian nobles.

In the villages of the Ukraine there were numerous peasants who had had their ears and noses cut off, or gallows branded on their foreheads. The Polish nobles were permitted by law to subject their peasants to such atrocities and even put them to death.

Polish oppression of other nationalities under their rule was also extremely harsh. The Catholic Polish nobles made a mockery of the language, customs and religious practices of the Byelorussian and Ukrainian peasantry, who were of the Orthodox faith. Religious repression and persecution were widespread, and there were attempts to force people to adopt Catholicism.

In the sixteenth century and the first half of the seventeenth, uprisings against the Polish landowners and administrative officials broke out in various places. An important part in the struggle against the Polish nobles in the Ukraine was played by the Zaporozhye Cossacks from the area around the Dnieper rapids. The Cossack community was made up of Ukrainian and Byelorussian peasants seeking refuge from Polish nobles; it also included Russian peasants escaping from oppression by the boyars, the *dvo-ryane* and the Tsar and state officials.

In the 1640s and '50s a large-scale popular rebellion flared up throughout the Ukraine and Byelorussia. The peasants were supported by the Zaporozhye Cossacks and the poorer townspeople.

The peasant army was led by Bogdan Khmelnytsky, and the

war began in earnest in the spring of 1648. The peasants started to settle accounts with the Polish nobles and the local Ukrainian landowners. Bands of peasants came to join Khmelnitsky from far and wide and soon the revolt spread to the whole of the Ukraine and Byelorussia.

The Russian people supported the struggle of the Ukrainians and the Byelorussians against their Polish overlords. Detachments of Don Cossacks, Russian peasants and townspeople took part in the struggle. The Russian government had long been making a practice of helping the insurgent Ukraine by sending it food and arms.

Khmelnitsky turned to the Russian Tsar Alexei requesting him to make the Ukraine part of the Russian state. The question was subjected to long and detailed deliberation in Moscow. The Russians were well aware that this would mean Russia fighting Poland on Ukrainian soil; however, the tremendous significance of the union was appreciated and Muscovy finally agreed. Boyar Vassily Buturlin was sent to the Ukraine as the Tsar's envoy, and a general council or *rada* was convened in the city of Pereyaslav to make the final arrangements for the union.

A large number of interested parties assembled for the occasion—Cossacks and their *starshina** and representatives from many towns and villages of the Ukraine. The deliberations were conducted in an atmosphere of great excitement and were opened with a fiery speech by Bogdan Khmelnitsky, in which he called attention to the sufferings of the Ukrainian people, their hard struggle accompanied by so much bloodshed and the fact that the Ukraine could not stand alone, but should voluntarily unite with Russia. The assembled company voiced unanimous support for his proposal. Thus the Pereyaslav *Rada* of 1654 decreed that the Ukraine and Russia should unite and "stand as one for all time".

Such was the outcome of the people's struggle for the unification of the Ukraine and Russia. This event was to prove of major importance for both peoples in the subsequent history of the Russian state.

The Ukrainian people was thus freed from political and religious oppression to which the Polish nobles had subjected them. The arbitrary laws of the Polish landowners no longer held good. Despite its inherent cruelty, the Russian system of serfdom unlike the Polish order, did not permit landowners to sentence peasants to death. Thus the oppression of the serfs in the Ukraine was somewhat lightened once the Polish landowners had been driven out.

* Cossack *starshina*—Cossack leaders who assumed supreme command in times of war.

Unification with Russia also promoted the overall advancement of the Ukraine and economic, political and cultural ties between the Ukrainian and Russian peoples. It was now easier for the two peoples to oppose both their common oppressors in the social hierarchy at home and powerful enemies from abroad. Immediately after the union of Russia and the Ukraine war broke out between Russia and Poland which was to last 13 years. Under the Andruszow treaty of 1667 the Russian state regained the territories seized by Poland at the beginning of the seventeenth century in south-west Russia and secured the Ukraine east of the Dnieper and Kiev (on its Western bank). The Ukraine west of the Dnieper remained in Polish hands.

Stepan Razin

The seventeenth century saw several large-scale popular uprisings, the most momentous of which was the movement led by the Don Cossack Stepan Razin. The revolt began in the Don area, where peasant fugitives from serfdom and poverty had long since come to settle. In this area there were prosperous Cossacks but the vast majority were poor ones with practically no possessions. The Cossack poor were led by Stepan Razin, an experienced soldier who had seen a great deal of the world having crossed vast tracts of Russia on foot and seen the sufferings of the serfs and their bitter hatred and grudges against the landowners and the tsarist *voyevodas*.

The revolt began with an expedition down the Volga in 1667. Razin and his men ambushed merchant and tsarist vessels, seized their cargoes, made short work of tsarist officials and persuaded the majority of the members of the ships' crews to join their band. The gunpowder and arms looted from the ships also came in extremely useful.

After wintering on the shores of the Ural River, then called the Yaik, during the spring floods Razin and his men made their way down to the Caspian where they captured convoys of Persian ships laden with rich cargoes. After seizing large quantities of silk, valuables and many oriental luxuries Razin and his men returned to Astrakhan on the Volga. In the meantime news of Razin's Persian exploit had spread far and wide.

A foreign visitor who met Razin gave the following description of him: "He has a fine countenance, noble bearing and proud mien. He is tall with a weather-beaten pitted complexion. He succeeds in inspiring in his men fear, mingled with respect and admiration. Whatever his commands they are without exception obeyed to the letter."

In 1669 Razin and his men returned to the Don and began to prepare for a new foray. First of all they seized the steppe road leading to Moscow, they set up strong fortified posts on the highroads and waylaid tsarist spies. Wherever they went the local peasantry took up arms, rallied to their local leaders and then came flocking to Razin's side. In this way his army soon grew from strength to strength.

In May 1670 the uprising took on a more political character. Razin's men were no longer just out for booty and came to represent a serious threat to the landowners and the tsarist *voyevodas*.

Razin's forces took the town of Tsaritsyn (now Volgograd) and then Astrakhan. In all the towns which surrendered to Razin the tsarist governors or *voyevodas* were killed or expelled and their archives, where the charters laying down the landowners' rights over the peasants were kept, were burnt down.

Razin and his followers then made their way up the Volga and captured Saratov and Samara (now Kuibyshev). Peasants from the nearby villages flocked to join Razin's army and rose up against their masters. They were joined by the peasants living on the crown and monastery lands and the Volga peoples—Mordvinians, Chuvash and Mari—who had been subjected to cruel oppression by the tsarist authorities. Soon the uprising had spread to the whole of the Nizhny Novgorod region and even as far as Penza and Tambov. The peasants laid waste the boyar and *dvoryane* estates, and killed their masters. Throughout the land Razin's men sent out proclamations calling on the people to take up arms. Important new peasant leaders such as ataman Nechai and the peasant Chirok distinguished themselves. Among the peasant leaders there was even a woman by the name of Alyona, who led a band of seven thousand peasants and was completely fearless in battle. The *voyevodas* were in terror of her and thought she was a witch.

The insurgent peasants saw their main aim to lie in wreaking vengeance on their own local masters. They felt that by destroying their houses they were doing away with serfdom for ever. In fact, of course, the peasants' main enemy was the system of serfdom as a whole with the supreme landowner, the Tsar, at its head. The peasants did not realise that their main enemy was autocracy and were still under the illusion that a hostile Tsar supporting the landowners could be replaced by a good Tsar who would understand the peasants' needs. But this could never be, the Tsar would always be the defender of the landowners' interests.

Peasant uprisings kept on flaring up in various parts of the country but the campaign lacked any overall plan for revolutionary action and was not organised well enough. The peasants were inexperienced in warfare and were short of arms. They took with

them scythes, cudgels and axes which were to prove sadly ineffective against the Tsar's cannon.

The tsarist government sent out an enormous army against Razin, led by experienced commanders. Despite brave resistance, the peasant revolt was crushed. Some of the cruellest reprisals were those meted out in the town of Arzamas, which was literally littered with gallows on each of which hung forty or fifty bodies. Eleven thousand men were hanged in the course of three months.

The leader of the uprising was also to meet with a sad fate. At first Razin went into hiding in the lands of the Don Cossacks, but some of the richer among them handed him over to the tsarist authorities. He was brought to Moscow and subjected to cruel torture. In June 1671 Razin was quartered alive on the Red Square.

Although the peasant risings of this period failed to do away with serfdom, they served to undermine the strength of the system and shorten its life.

The Formation of the Russian Empire

In the seventeenth century Russia was a backward country in comparison with the progressive countries of Western Europe. The development of Russia had suffered a severe setback as a result of the Tartar invasion. The cruel Tartar yoke had lasted over two hundred years. Once the invaders had been driven out, towns and villages had to be rebuilt, and local crafts revived. The division of the country into a host of petty princedoms was a problem facing Russia, just as it had been in other feudal states. However, the unification of Russia was a particularly difficult task because of the tremendous size of its territory which was equal to that of many European states put together. Russia lacked any convenient sea ports or developed industry. Neither did she have a properly organised army or fleet, and was thus prey to frequent raids and attacks by foreign invaders which undermined her economy still further.

It was particularly important that Russia should combat this backwardness at the time when the countries of Western Europe were progressing so rapidly. Otherwise the latter would have subjugated the country and held back her advancement still more.

At that period the time was not yet ripe for the emergence of capitalism in Russia—the country was still a centralised feudal state, its economy based on serf agriculture. However, important steps forward were taken and significant changes in the administration and economy introduced.

It was a task of primary importance to restructure the out-dated state apparatus, promote cultural advancement and industrial ex-



Peter the Great

pansion. Russia needed outlets to the sea in order to set up convenient trade routes with Western Europe and establish firm cultural ties. She was obliged to set up a regular army and fleet to defend herself from her powerful neighbours. These steps were to be taken during the reign of Peter the Great (1682-1725).

During Peter's reign, while not overcoming her backwardness altogether, Russia nevertheless made significant advances, thanks to the efforts of the Russian and other peoples of the empire. The gifted and resourceful new Tsar and his councillors were to play an important part in these developments.

The Russian state had long required a coastline. The White Sea was frozen over and unnavigable for six or seven months of the year and was anyway a long distance from all the main sea routes. The shores of the Baltic were then in Swedish hands and Turkey held sway in the Black Sea. Under Peter Russia embarked on a long, uphill struggle for power in the Baltic.

Part of the lands bordering on the Baltic, such as the shores of the Gulf of Finland, had in the past been ruled over by the princes of Novgorod. Five centuries before Peter came to the throne

pilots from Novgorod had come to the Gulf to meet German merchant vessels at the island of Kotlin (now Kronstadt) and then lead them up the Neva, through Lake Ladoga and down to Novgorod by way of the Volkhov. It was on this part of the coast that Prince Alexander Nevsky had defended the lands of Novgorod in a grim battle against the Swedes on the banks of the Neva in the thirteenth century.

Peter the Great concluded an alliance with the Poles and the Danes against Sweden, and war with the latter broke out in the autumn of 1700. The Northern War, as it was known, was to last for 21 years. In the early stages, the Swedes, who were better prepared for hostilities, had the upper hand. The Russian forces confronted the Swedes near the fortress of Narva in November 1700, when winter was already at hand. The Swedes who were better shod and armed emerged victorious from this first encounter.

The defeat at Narva proved an important lesson for both the Russian army and Peter the Great. Intensive work began to equip a new, more proficient army, and new troops were mustered and trained. When it emerged that there was a shortage of metal for weapons Peter gave orders for church bells to be recast as cannon. In this way 300 new cannon were obtained and in the autumn of 1702 Peter succeeded in capturing the heavily fortified Swedish fortress at the point where the Neva flows out of Lake Ladoga, where the ancient town of Oreshek of the Novgorod principedom had stood. To this fortress, which gave him access to the sea by way of the Neva, Peter gave the German name of Schliesselburg (Key-Town).

These military successes meant that Russia was now in control of the shores of the Gulf of Finland. The foundations for the Peter and Paul Fortress were laid on Zayachy Island near the Northern bank of the Neva. It was near this fortress, built according to Peter's drawings, that in 1703 he was to found his new capital on the marshy banks of the Neva. It was to be known as Peter's town, i.e., Petersburg or St. Petersburg, and has since been renamed Leningrad after the founder of the Soviet state.

The building of the new capital required the labour of thousands of serfs. Despite the severe cold and inhuman conditions the new capital gradually arose. Many of the labourers had to work knee-deep in water and were obliged to wage a grim battle with the elements as they laid foundations in the shifting marshy soil. This town, which cost the lives of numerous serfs and workmen, was to prove tremendously important for Russia's future. The country had acquired a maritime capital and large trading port, a "window onto Europe".

In 1707 the theatre of operations was transferred to the Ukraine and in June 1709 the Russians gained a decisive victory at Polta-

va. The Northern War dragged on until 1721. By the Peace of Nystad Russia received Latvia and Estonia along with the whole coast of the Gulf of Finland around St. Petersburg and part of Karelia. This meant that Russia had gained two more convenient Baltic ports, Riga and Revel (now Tallinn), and become an established Baltic power thus attaining one of her most cherished aims.

To mark the conclusion of the Peace of Nystad Peter laid on lavish celebrations in his new capital and that same year he was also to assume the title of Emperor of All the Russias. The Russian state was to be known henceforth as the Russian Empire, which reflected its emergence as a great power. "After being nonexistent we have started to exist and have now joined the community of peoples politic," declared Peter's advisers at the time.

State Reforms Introduced During Peter's Reign

During Peter's reign a large number of social and state reforms were introduced. They were implemented at the cost of a bitter struggle with the reactionary boyars and church hierarchy, and were to play an important part in securing the country's advancement.

Before Peter's reign there had been no regular army in Russia. Troops had been mustered only in case of war. Peter set up a regular army and organised its proper training. The recruiting system was also reorganised. Men in the ranks were recruited from both the peasantry and the urban population. One soldier was recruited from every twenty peasant households, whenever recruits were rounded up. All members of the nobility were obliged to serve in the army. A uniform was also introduced; members of Peter's guards wore short dark green tunics, comfortable tricorne hats worn low on the forehead and were armed with bayonets.

Peter had begun to build his fleet before the Northern War broke out while he was making plans for an expedition to the Sea of Azov. At the beginning of the Northern War, when Russia had already gained control of part of the Baltic coast, a new Baltic fleet was built. The first squadron of Russian ships was launched in 1703; it consisted of six frigates (three-mast men-of-war). By the end of Peter's reign the Baltic fleet consisted of 48 large warships and 800 galleys and small vessels, and 28,000 sailors.

Peter was determined that Russia should be as independent of foreign powers as possible and start to produce everything she needed on home soil, relying on her own potential.

Large new iron works were built near Olonets, Tula and in the Urals. At the Tula armoury thousands of guns and pistols were

produced every year. Manufactories for the production of canvas and rope were built to supply the needs of the fleet.

To provide the necessary manpower, Peter ordered thousands of peasants to be sent as serf workers to these manufactories. Whole villages were assigned to various enterprises which sometimes were as far as three or four hundred miles away and the working conditions were extremely harsh. There was a shortage of skilled workers and so Peter invited foundry workers and skilled craftsmen in the cloth and paper industries from abroad to come and teach their skills to Russian workmen. It was now imperative for the cloth industry to start putting out fine woolen cloth. It was at this period that fine-fleeced Silesian sheep were first brought to Russia and cloth manufactories were set up.

Before Peter's reign there had existed a Boyars' Duma at the court of the Tsar of Muscovy, a large assembly which at the Tsar's command had discussed various affairs of state. By the seventeenth century this body had already become clearly obsolete and the dyed in the wool Moscow boyars found it more and more difficult to cope with increasingly complicated affairs of state. In 1711 Peter replaced the Boyars' Duma with a Senate of nine members, hand-picked by the Tsar himself and entrusted with important affairs of state.

The central administrative organs which had existed in Russia were known as prikazy (or departments) and there were approximately fifty of them. They sprang up intermittently whenever the need arose. They were badly organised and frequently obstructed each other's work. Peter did away with these too and replaced them with an incomparably more streamlined system of ministerial colleges.

In Moscow Peter set up a Navigation School where mathematics were taught for the first time in Russia. It was later transferred to St. Petersburg and made into a Naval Academy. Special arithmetic schools were opened in the provinces, along with schools for the study of reading and writing, mathematics, engineering, naval skills, accounting and medicine. All these schools were of a clearly practical bent.

Peter also gave instructions for an Academy of Sciences to be founded (1724), which were carried out after his death. The first Russian newspaper was printed in Peter's reign and the first public theatre was opened.

The reforms introduced by Peter the Great met with strong opposition from the boyars who were staunch defenders of the traditional way of life. One of the methods Peter used against them was forcible Europeanisation of everyday moeurs. He gave orders for his courtiers to cease wearing long Russian robes and adopt short European garments and shave their beards. During a recep-

tion in the village of Preobrazhenskoye near Moscow Peter himself started cutting off the boyars' beards and the long skirts of their traditional robes. Compulsory gatherings of the nobility were organised at the residences of the various Moscow grandees in turn. This Europeanisation drive, however, was to affect only the upper stratum and make little imprint on society as a whole.

The European calendar was also introduced. Previously the Russian calendar had gone back to the year of the Creation, but in 1700 Peter adopted the calendar used throughout the rest of Europe.

Although Peter was unable to make a complete break with the past, important steps forward were made in what still remained a feudal serf-owning society. Russia had become an empire with a stronghold on the Baltic coast and a sea-power to be reckoned with. She now possessed a powerful army and fleet; industry and trade had been considerably expanded. The state apparatus had begun to function much more efficiently and important advances had been made in the sphere of education. The countries of Western Europe were now starting to take notice of developments in this powerful Russian Empire and seek closer ties with it.

These successes were reaped at the cost of tremendous efforts by the common people and, not infrequently, entailed the loss of numerous lives. Tens of thousands perished in the course of the Northern War, at the walls of the fortress of Narva and on Poltava Field. They were drilled in the military arts, worked under great pressure building ships for the new fleet at Voronezh and on the Neva, and died by hundreds and thousands as a result of hunger, disease, damp and dangerous working conditions building Peter's new capital. It was the common people who made it possible for Peter to open up dozens of new factories, it was they who smelted metal and extracted ore by the light of splinter-torches. The Petrine Empire was built with money wrested from them in the form of crippling taxes and by means of exploitation of the oppressed masses. The consolidation of the Russian Empire benefited above all the *dvoryane* and the merchant entrepreneurs.

The First Seeds of Disintegration in the Russian Serf Economy

Russia's feudal economy was now starting to hold back the country's progress more and more, as had been the case in other European countries. New economic relations of a capitalist variety gradually started to take shape within the old framework.

They were to emerge first of all in the sphere of industry. More and more large manufactories started to spring up, both private

ones owned by the *dvoryane*, and state-owned ones. For manpower they relied in the main on forced peasant labour. Merchants and prosperous peasants also started setting up enterprises, employing workmen on a voluntary basis. So in the sphere of industry there came to exist side by side new, capitalist patterns and old patterns based on compulsory serf labour. This was one of the first signs of the weakening of the serf economy.

By the middle of the eighteenth century, Russia had a total of some 650 industrial enterprises employing over 80,000 workmen. By the end of the eighteenth century 109 blast furnaces were operating and putting out about 160,000 tons of cast iron a year. For a certain period Russia's metal industry output was even larger than that of England.

At the same time there was a marked growth of the towns. It was in the towns that crafts and industry were centred and the towns started to need more and more produce as their population increased. By the end of the eighteenth century, Moscow had a population approaching 200,000 resident inhabitants.

The feudal landowners started to trade more and more in agricultural produce, which brought them large revenues, subjecting their serfs to increasing oppression in order to squeeze out of them as much agricultural produce as possible. Gradually the natural economy was replaced by a national market with the abolition of internal customs barriers. This new phenomenon was also incompatible with the system of serfdom and served to some extent to undermine it.

In 1762 the imperial government produced a decree freeing the *dvoryane* from obligatory state service. Large numbers of the *dvoryane* went back to their estates and, with their masters on the spot, life for the peasants became still more burdensome and punishments for insubordination still more severe.

The peasants' patience was being tested beyond endurance. They were anxious to gain a new life without masters, to farm independently and have their own plots. They started to demand emancipation. At the end of the eighteenth century when the system of serfdom was already starting to disintegrate these aspirations were to spread to ever larger sectors of the peasantry and served to inspire them to revolt.

Unrest had long been rife in the Urals and the Volga valley. All that was needed was a spark to set the fire of revolt ablaze.

The Peasant War Led by Yemelyan Pugachov

Near the Yaik River in the Urals the situation was particularly tense, at the spot where a hundred years earlier Razin had made a name for himself with his brave forays. A strange rumour started

to spread among the peasants and Cossacks in the area to the effect that Peter III, who had been slain at the command of his wife Catherine II (1762-1796), was in reality still alive and in hiding somewhere in the Urals or near the Volga. Soon he would make himself known and make war on Empress Catherine, the oppressor of the peasants.

The man who declared himself Peter III was Yemelyan Pugachov, a poor Cossack from the village of Zimoveiskaya on the Don. He had deserted from the Tsar's army and seen a great deal of the country and his people's suffering.

The Pugachov uprising started in 1773. Peasants and Cossacks discontent with the conditions of serfdom started to flock to his support. In his proclamations and appeals to the people Pugachov promised to free all the peasants from their masters, grant them their freedom for the rest of their lives, give them land, and put the woods and rivers at their disposal. He called upon them to rise up against the *dvoryane* and all those in the Tsar's service. He gave orders for the *dvoryane* who brought about the peasants' ruin to be captured, slain and hanged.

Pugachov's army was soon to capture a number of tsarist fortresses and lay siege to the main town of the Urals, Orenburg. They went on to capture Samara and Krasnoufimsk and besiege Chelyabinsk. After failing to capture Orenburg Pugachov withdrew into Bashkiria.

Insurgent serfs flocked to join Pugachov; the peoples of the Urals and the Volga valley who had been subjected to particularly hard oppression also joined in the uprising—the Bashkirs, Tartars, Kalmyks, Kazakhs, Chuvash, Mari, Mordvinians and others. Pugachov's manifestos were written not only in Russian but also in Tartar, Bashkir and other languages. Leaders of these insurgent peoples were to play a prominent role in the uprising, for example the young leader of the Bashkirs, Salavat Yulayev, who was also a poet and wrote songs for the rebel army.

The serf workers were an important contingent in Pugachov's army. In that period there was already a large number of factories in the Urals, above all iron and copper works, where cannon and cannon balls were made. The men who made these cannon were competent when it came to using them. At the siege of Orenburg Pugachov's men proved such good marksmen that the tsarist generals marvelled: "We would never have expected that from the muzhiks."

After going into hiding in Bashkiria Pugachov was soon to confront the tsarist army with a still stronger and more menacing force. He crossed the river Kama and captured the factories at Izhevsk and Votkinsk which opened the road to Kazan. Pugachov himself led the siege of Kazan and, outstanding artilleryman

that he was, succeeded in capturing the city. The riches of the *dvoryane* were shared out among the men of the insurgent army. But Pugachov's success was to prove short-lived, for this peasant uprising, like those that had gone before it, was completely spontaneous and lacking in proper organisation and therefore doomed to failure.

After abandoning Kazan Pugachov withdrew southwards. The decisive battle of the war was fought out at Sarepta and although the rebel army put up a brave resistance they were not a match for the tsarist army. Rich Cossacks later betrayed Pugachov to the tsarist generals, who sent him chained in a cage to Moscow, where he was executed on Bolotnaya Square in 1775. The only spectators allowed were representatives of the *dvoryane*.

So ended the peasant uprising led by Pugachov. Although it was cruelly suppressed it was to be of great significance, since it showed the Russian gentry that powerful opposition to the oppressive serf system was growing up among the masses. These peasant uprisings served to erode the serf system more and more, bringing ever nearer the date of its final demise.

Russian Foreign Policy During the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century

In the second half of the eighteenth century Russia was still an empire in which the direction of affairs of state was exclusively in the hands of the *dvoryane*. The interests of that class and the increasing number of merchants demanded further territorial expansion. The serf system was starting to disintegrate and the *dvoryane* were trying to counter this in every possible way, going all out to preserve the old order. They hoped to use the acquisition of new lands to this end as well. The Black Sea coast held out special attractions.

In 1768 the troops of the Crimean Khan—a vassal of the Turkish sultan—invaded the southern part of Russia and the Russo-Turkish War started. The Russians scored major victories under the outstanding commanders Rumyantsev and Suvorov. In 1774 the war ended with the Treaty of Kuchuk-Kainarji.

The Treaty contained extremely advantageous terms for Russia, and its effect was to give her a firm hold on the northern shore of the Black Sea and a foothold on the eastern shore. In 1783 the Crimean Khan whose independence was now little more than nominal, renounced his claims to power and the Crimea became part of Russia. Thus Russia acquired an outlet to the Black Sea and strengthened her power in the area.

In 1654 when the union of the Ukraine and Russia had taken

place, the Ukraine west of the Dnieper and Byelorussia had still remained part of Poland. The Polish economy at this time was very weak and the peasantry was being subjected to particularly savage oppression. Feudal exploitation was also holding back urban development. These features all serve to explain why Poland was unable to prove a match for her powerful neighbours. At the end of the eighteenth century Poland was partitioned by Russia, Austria and Prussia and ceased to exist as an independent state. This was a tragedy for the Polish people. In the course of the partition the Western part of the Ukraine and Byelorussia were also accorded to Russia.

The Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century Russia. Lomonosov

The eighteenth century was a great age for Russian culture. One of the most prominent figures was Mikhail Lomonosov (1711-1765) who came from a simple peasant family.

Lomonosov was to reveal a many-sided genius: he was a talented physicist and chemist, astronomer, geologist, geographer, linguist, historian, poet, painter and engineer. He organised Russia's first chemical laboratory and discovered the Law of Conservation of Matter. In Lomonosov's scientific work theory was always closely bound up with practice. He campaigned for the exploitation of mineral resources and a search for new deposits.

Lomonosov made a large number of discoveries in many different fields of learning. His works in astronomy paved the way to the discovery that Venus has an atmosphere. He invented an apparatus resembling the modern helicopter. Lomonosov also wrote a number of extremely important textbooks such as the first Russian textbook on metallurgy and the first Russian grammar.

Lomonosov did a great deal for education in Russia and played an important part in founding the first Russian university, which was opened in Moscow in 1755. Two special schools attached to the university were also opened—one for the *dvoryane* and the other for children of the other free estates, such as the merchant class. Serfs, however, were not admitted either to the schools or the university. Lomonosov championed equal rights of admission for all social classes but the tsarist government made sure no such liberties were introduced.

Moscow University had three faculties: philosophy, law and medicine. Unlike other universities, it possessed no faculty of theology. It was soon to become a leading centre of Russian science and culture.

The First Summons to Revolution and Opposition to Serfdom

At the end of the eighteenth century the Russian Empire appeared to be at the height of its power and advancing rapidly. This feudal empire now stretched from the White and Baltic Seas in the north to the Black Sea in the south. It now had a well-organised civil service, and an army and fleet which had won considerable fame in recent battles. The Empress Catherine II who had been on the throne for over thirty years remained true to her noble blood and staunchly defended the interests of the land-owning class: exploitation of the serfs and privileges for the nobility became more entrenched than ever during her reign.

Soon after suppressing the Pugachov Revolt, the Empress published the "Letter of Grace to the Nobility" (1785) which served to uphold and systematise all the nobility's rights. This charter of Catherine II laid down that the members of the nobility were a class apart possessed of the privilege to own peasants as just so many chattels. They could only be called to account at the court of the nobility. The *dvoryane* felt themselves regular tsars on their own estates, treating the peasants as they saw fit, buying and selling them, making presents of them and using them as gambling stakes.

However, this might and brilliance of feudal Russia was undermined from within by the subsequent course of history. Serfdom was to hold back industrial development, the setting up of new factories and the introduction of machinery. It also stood in the way of the introduction of hired labour, and cultural development. Serfs were given no access to education and talented inventions were destined to be lost in obscurity.

Bourgeois revolutions had already taken place in England and France by this time and capitalism was developing apace complete with hired labour and the emergence of a new class, the proletariat. Absolutism had already been uprooted in these advanced countries, while in Russia autocracy was still deeply entrenched and all legislation was directed towards promoting the interests of the serf-owning nobility.

Yet there was a vast and growing potential to be explored in this country, which was developing apace despite the brake serfdom imposed. A steadily growing awareness of the need to do away with serfdom and autocracy was to be found among Russia's finest and most progressive sons.

In 1790 a copy of a new publication with the modest title *Journey from Petersburg to Moscow* was handed to the Empress. The name of the author was not printed on the cover. On reading its pages Catherine found herself face to face with revolutionary protest. The author of this work brought his compatriots a power-

ful and impassioned account of the evils and injustices of serfdom. He referred to the landowners as "gluttonous beasts, insatiable leeches". He described a landowner who had been growing rich thanks to the sweat and blood of his peasants in the following terms: "Barbarian! You are not worthy to bear the name of citizen. Your riches are the fruit of plunder. Call him a thief, destroy his farming implements, burn down his threshing barns and granaries and spread ashes over his fields where he enacted his tortures."

The author called for the complete abolition of serfdom and for the liberation of the peasants; he acknowledged the peasants' right to revolt against their masters. The book was also aimed against autocracy and its author's views were plainly republican: he considered that power should be in the hands of the people and regarded the Tsar as a "villain, than whom there is none more cruel". In short, this anonymous author was calling for the abolition of autocracy.

On reading the work the Empress declared it to be a revolt in itself, and that the author was more dangerous even than Pugachov. She gave orders for the man who had been selling the book to be arrested, and the latter under torture betrayed the name of its author, Alexander Radishchev. He was born in 1749 into a nobleman's family and been sent to study abroad. Back in Russia he had worked as assistant director of the St. Petersburg Customs House.

Catherine had Radishchev imprisoned and at his trial he was condemned to death. However the Empress was loath to carry out this sentence. She maintained close contact with various European philosophers and posed as an enlightened monarch. What would they say of her in Europe? Finally, instead of having Radishchev executed Catherine had him exiled to Eastern Siberia for ten years in the remote fortress of Ilim.

Radishchev spent six grim years in exile. Meanwhile in St. Petersburg his friends took up his case and eventually succeeded in having him released before his sentence was up. After his return to St. Petersburg Radishchev started work on a commission drafting new laws. However, he wrote such a radical draft law that his employers almost immediately succeeded in having him sent into exile in Siberia a second time. Already ill and a broken man Radishchev was unable to hold out any longer and in September 1802 he committed suicide by taking poison.

Alexander Radishchev was the first person in Russia to speak out against autocracy and serfdom. He did not confine his criticism to isolated aspects of the system, as was common practice among other progressive men of that period, but called for total abolition of the system as a whole by means of a nation-wide uprising.

Chapter Three

ENGLAND IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES. THE NORTH AMERICAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

Economic and Social Development in Eighteenth-Century England

One of the immediate consequences of the bourgeois revolution in England was a more rapid economic growth. Although there still remained certain vestiges of feudalism in the country there was wide scope for all-out capitalist development, and a period of tremendous industrial expansion followed. Wool and cotton manufactories, coal mining and iron smelting developed apace.

Industrial expansion, in particular in the wool industry, was accompanied by mass disappropriation of the peasant holdings. The growing demand for wool led landowners to drive the peasants from the land which they and their forefathers had been working for centuries, and turn arable land into pasture. The peasants were thus deprived of all they owned and forcibly turned into wage workers with nothing but the work of their hands to sell.

However, this process, so tragic for the impoverished peasants, was to lead to important economic consequences for the country as a whole. It meant that there were now ample sources of cheap labour in the towns and even a surplus, as wave after wave of peasants began flooding in from the countryside. Those who but yesterday had worked on the land and had been able to feed both themselves and their families from their own holdings, were now obliged to buy all essentials. Their scant earnings were now all spent on food, clothing, etc., which meant that the home market had to expand to keep pace with the growing urban population.

England's Colonial Gains in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

These developments promoted rapid, hitherto unprecedented industrial expansion, which in its turn required enormous capital investment. Where were the English bourgeoisie—merchants and

manufacturers—to find the wherewithal for this investment? The expanding trade of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was not a sufficient source of revenue in the circumstances. The main source of wealth for the English ruling class was plunder of the colonies.

Being an island with access to all the main sea routes and possessing a powerful fleet England was able to outstrip its many rivals in colonial expansion. In 1607 the English founded Virginia, their first colony in North America, and this was followed by the conquest of enormous territories in the New World. Soon thirteen colonies had been set up on what is today United States territory. The outcome of the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714) and the Seven Years' War (1756-1763) enabled England to wrest from France enormous possessions in both Canada and India. Bengal, Madras, the princedoms of Benares, Hyderabad and Oudh and various others became English colonies.

The lands thus seized were ruthlessly plundered by the English colonialists: they subjected the native populations to crippling taxes, and sold their wares at ridiculously high prices, for far more than they were really worth. The colonialists sailed home with rich cargoes of gold and precious stones leaving behind them a trail of death, impoverishment and desolation.

The Industrial Revolution

After concentrating large capital resources in their hands, driving the peasants from the land and thus creating ample supplies of cheap labour the English bourgeoisie was now able to expand its industrial undertakings. An additional stimulus to this end was the demand for a larger home and foreign market.

The high level of production in the manufactories and the advanced division of labour provided the essential preconditions for the technological revolution—the substitution of mechanised labour for manual labour. The first machines—mechanical looms and spinning jennies—appeared in the eighteenth century in the cotton industry, which was assured of ample supplies of raw materials from India and America and was spurred on by competition with its foreign rivals. The introduction of machinery made possible a tremendous leap forward, since not even the most skilled manual labour could hope to compete with the machine. Naturally enough, this rapid advance in the cotton industry left other industries out in the cold, and they found it essential to introduce machinery too without delay. Technical inventions served to transform and gradually perfect production in all the main industries—including coal mining and iron smelting. In 1784 James

Watt, the Greenock engineer, invented the steam engine, adaptations of which were to be used in many different industries. This invention was of momentous importance in the acceleration and refinement of mechanical production, paving the way for the technological revolution in transport. In 1807 the first steamship invented by Robert Fulton made its way, albeit very slowly, down the Hudson river in America. In 1814 George Stephenson designed the first locomotive engine, and a few years later the first railway was built, yet another event of major importance for subsequent industrial advance. The industrial revolution which took place in England in the eighteenth century was to exert an enormous influence on the course of economic development throughout the rest of the world. In the course of the nineteenth century almost all the countries of Europe and North America were to experience a similar industrial revolution, although with various local modifications, sometimes of a highly significant variety. Meanwhile let us concentrate here on the immediate consequences of this revolution in Britain itself.

By the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century Britain was the leading industrial and commercial power in Europe. Britain was to become the world's first industrial power and at the same time the only country in which the urban population exceeded the rural population. By this time, apart from London other big industrial towns had grown up in England such as Birmingham, Manchester and Newcastle which had very large populations by the standards of those times. The peasantry which until recently had constituted the largest section of the population practically disappeared.

The urban population was far from uniform. The vast majority of the town dwellers were factory workers. The formation of a class of industrial workers, the proletariat, was to prove one of the decisive results of the industrial revolution. The proletariat owned nothing except the hands they worked with. Poverty obliged them to work in factories in the most appalling conditions. During the early stages of the industrial revolution when the workers did not yet have any experience in fighting for their interests and there was a large labour surplus, the capitalists subjected the workers to ruthless exploitation. They went all out to squeeze as much as they could out of the workers in the shortest possible time. The working day was often 16 or 18 hours a day and wide use was made of women's and child labour, which was cheaper still. This boundless exploitation of the workers threatened them with physical or at least spiritual degeneration.

Eventually the workers were to engage in a struggle to alter these intolerable conditions. To begin with, they lacked experience and their anger was blind, and they took the course of

breaking machines in the naive belief that the machines were the cause of all their sufferings. But soon they came to realise that it was not the machines but their owners who were responsible. In time they grasped that it was the factory owners who were bleeding them dry and growing rich on the fruits of their labour.

Contrasts in urban architecture were soon to provide a vivid reflection of glaring social contrasts. The impoverished workers lived in dark dirty districts in dilapidated houses and basement tenements while in other districts amid sunlit gardens stood the splendid homes of the rich—the factory owners, bankers, men of means and members of the aristocracy.

After the industrial revolution two separate Englands were to emerge, two camps diametrically opposed to each other: the world of the exploiters—the industrial bourgeoisie, colonialists and hereditary aristocracy—a world of luxury and wealth, which bled dry the working class and the subject peoples in the colonies; and the world of the exploited—the industrial workers, petty clerks, craftsmen, paupers and the labour force in the colonies—a world of injustice and poverty. For their own survival, and the future of their children and the whole of mankind, the working people led by the proletariat were destined to wage an uncompromising struggle against the capitalists.

Seeds of Strife in the British Colonies in North America

The cruel and ruthless exploitation to which the English ruling classes subjected their own proletariat and the colonial peoples inevitably gave rise to resistance on the part of the latter. In the nineteenth and particularly in the twentieth century, the proletariat's liberation struggle and the struggle for independence waged by the colonial peoples reached new heights and brought about fundamental changes in the balance of power between the exploiters and the exploited. However, as early as the eighteenth century, when British capitalism was advancing from strength to strength, Britain was to suffer a major defeat and be obliged to retreat in face of the first revolutionary uprising in her colonies.

In the years that had passed since 1607 when the first British colony had been founded in North America many changes had taken place in Britain's colonies. The population in the colonies was growing rapidly. During the bourgeois revolution Royalists had come out to settle in America, after the Restoration there had been an influx of Cromwell's followers, subjected to persecution under the new order, and a steady stream of peasants fleeing from poverty, run-away convicts, and adventurers. The

social composition of the colonial population was extremely motley but in the main they were strong persevering men undismayed by hardships and reverses of fortune.

The virgin coasts of North America where the Europeans settled were by no means uninhabited, and the native Indians were extremely wary of the uninvited newcomers. Initial encounters and skirmishes soon gave place to a grim struggle in which the Europeans inevitably retained the upper hand, since the Indians' spears and arrows were no match for firearms. In these conditions the struggle between colonisers and natives was soon to degenerate into an extermination drive against the Indians.

After the Europeans had driven the Indians out of the best coastal land and gradually advanced westwards into the interior, rapid territorial expansion was to continue unabated for over 150 years. By the end of the eighteenth century there were already 13 British colonies in the New World with a population of over one and a half million.

The colonies were administered by governors appointed by the English King. The British government showed little concern for the needs of the colonial population in faraway America and granted them few rights. The Crown looked upon the colonies first and foremost as a means of filling the royal coffers. Heavy taxes were imposed and all kinds of requisitions were made at the slightest pretext, while no heed at all was paid to the interests and requirements of the inhabitants.

This self-seeking policy of the British government, the arbitrary rule of the colonial governors and their administrative staff, and the stationing of ever larger contingents of British troops in the American colonies all gave rise to deep discontent. In 1763 George III forbade the colonists to advance west beyond the Allegheny Mountains. In 1765 the British Parliament introduced a new stamp tax on all trade dealings, documents, newspapers, announcements, etc.

The population of the American colonies was by no means homogeneous. Different sections of the population engaged in agriculture, industry and trade, and here as everywhere the interests of rich and poor clashed. However, in the 1770s, despite class and other antagonisms the vast majority of the colonists were united in their indignation at the arbitrary rule and restrictions imposed on them by the British authorities.

The Outbreak of the War of Independence

The armed uprising of the local inhabitants against the British authorities which took place in Boston in March 1770 and in the course of which several people were killed aroused deep indignation.



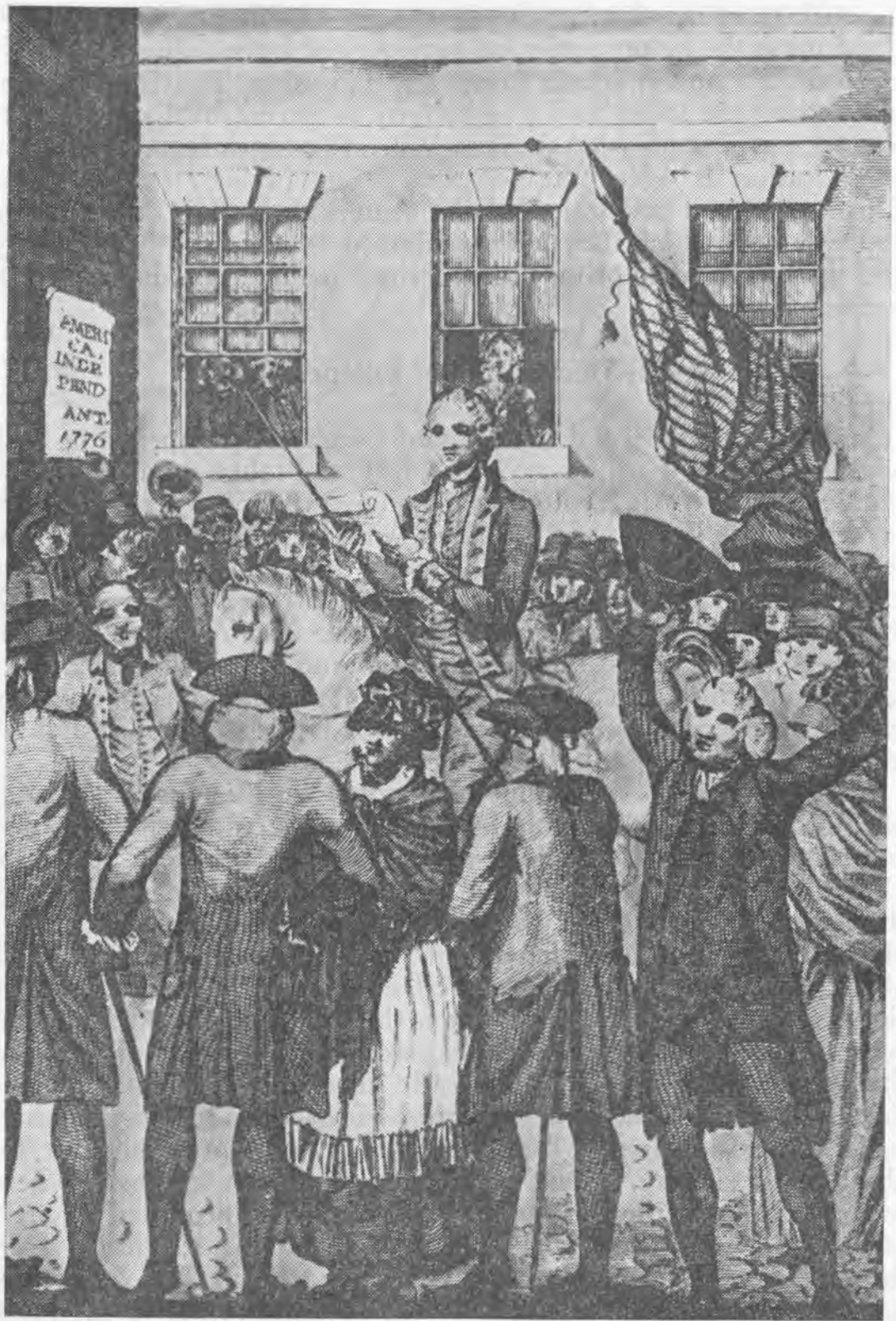
tion among the colonists. In the following year British troops again opened fire on the civilian population in North Carolina. The British government decided ruthlessly to suppress the unrest in the colonies. However, this policy was to lead to the opposite of the desired results. In 1774 the first American forces were rallied to fight for the colonists' independence. The first battle between government troops and the colonists took place on April 19, 1775 at

the village of Lexington. Small groups of riflemen were able to stand up to the better equipped government forces, since they were more mobile and quick to grasp any initiative. The British army suffered severe losses and was obliged to retreat in disarray. Such was the opening of the American War of Independence, a just war of liberation in which the colonists defended their lawful rights. This war was a revolution of the American people against the oppression to which they were subjected by the British monarchy, and was destined to bring the American people freedom and independence.

The Declaration of Independence

In May 1775 a Second Continental Congress was opened in Philadelphia at which all the colonies which had taken up arms against the British were represented. The Congress adopted a resolution to sever ties with Britain and set up an American Army, incorporating the existing resistance forces. George Washington (1732-1799) was appointed commander-in-chief of the army. Despite the formidable difficulties he had to face, Washington was to show himself worthy of the task with which he was entrusted and it was this same resolute commander who was to lead the American forces until the insurgent colonies had rid themselves of British rule once and for all.

On July 4, 1776 the Congress adopted the famous Declaration of Independence. With this bold revolutionary act the insurgent colonists declared themselves a free and independent state, the United States of America. July 4th became a national holiday of the American people and has remained so to this day. The author of the Declaration of Independence was Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826), the outstanding democratic leader of the American revolution. Jefferson was very much under the influence of Rousseau from whom he had gleaned his ideas regarding the equality of man and the people's sovereignty. Democratic ideas such as these provided the foundation of the Declaration of Independence and accounted for the inclusion in the Declaration of a point providing for the abolition of slavery. However the rich planters and slave-owners, who were represented in force at the Congress, protested strongly at this point and eventually succeeded in having it omitted from the final text. So in this young free state, which had only just gained its independence, slavery was to remain. However, taken all in all, at that period, when feudalism held sway over almost the entire world complete with its rigid social inequality, political injustice and backwardness, the Declaration of Independence, proclaiming as it did man's right to freedom, was an extremely progressive document.



The publication of the Declaration of Independence. Engraving dated 1783

The Conduct of the War

The proclamation of the independent United States did not however mean that such a state had already come into being in practice. First of all a long grim war against England was to be waged. At the outset the odds were in favour of the British forces since they were able to blockade the American coast with their large fleet and finance a large army of mercenaries. The English troops inflicted a series of heavy defeats on the rebels (as they called the American patriots). However, the Americans were fighting for a just, righteous cause and this gave them added strength. Many progressive men from other lands (including Saint-Simon, later a prominent utopian socialist, and the leader of the Polish liberation movement, Tadeusz Kosciuszko) set off across the Atlantic to join the ranks of the "freedom boys", as the American soldiers were called. The people of the newly formed United States skilfully turned differences between the European powers to their own advantage and in 1778 France and Spain were won over to their side and declared war on the British.

After long years of grim struggle the Americans succeeded in defeating the British. On October 19, 1781 Washington's army forced the British to capitulate at Yorktown, a victory which was to decide the outcome of the war. On September 3, 1783 the belligerent states signed a peace treaty at Versailles recognising the United States as an independent sovereign state. So ended the courageous revolutionary struggle of the American people for their freedom and the independence of their land.

The Constitution of 1787 and the Bill of Rights

This war had drained the United States' material and manpower resources most heavily. Increased taxes were now necessary and a serious depreciation of money also resulted from the war, hitting the poor hardest of all. Many of the poor who had fought so bravely for their country's freedom were now without the necessary means to pay their debts and were thus condemned to prison. In the autumn of 1786 an uprising of the poor broke out in Massachusetts. The insurgents demanded that the debtors be released and that plots of land be distributed to the poor free of charge. The rich plantation and factory owners who set the tone of parliamentary proceedings sent troops out against them and suppressed the uprising by force in February 1787.

In May 1787 a Constitutional Convention opened in Philadelphia and by September it had drafted a new constitution. The 1787



George Washington. Engraving

Constitution laid down that the United States was a federal state, a republic in which the supreme legislative body was Congress and supreme executive power should lie with the President. The Constitution did not abolish slavery and granted the people few rights. Nevertheless, in comparison with other constitutions of that period it was distinctly progressive.

In 1789 the first Congress was elected and George Washington was voted first President of the United States. Under popular pressure Congress accepted ten amendments to the Constitution in 1789, which were to go down in history as the Bill of Rights. These alterations assured the people freedom of speech, assembly and the press, inviolability of person and other rights. The Bill of Rights did not abolish slavery but it introduced the basic principles of bourgeois democracy in the young republic. At that period this in itself was a major achievement.

Chapter Four

THE PEOPLES OF ASIA IN THE SEVENTEENTH-EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

In this period the history of the peoples of Latin America, Asia and Africa was largely influenced by the colonial policy of the European powers.

The Colonial Policy of Spain and Portugal

The Spanish colonised all Central America and the whole of South America, with the exception of Brazil which came under Portuguese rule. Spain also owned the Philippine Islands which she had conquered at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Ruthless massacres at the slightest sign of resistance, forced labour in the mines and feudal service on the estates of the Spaniards and their descendants, the Creoles—such was the lot of the Indians, those, that is, who survived. Negro slaves brought over from Africa were used as servants in the households of landowners and administrative officials and as a source of labour power in regions where the Indian population had been wiped out. Spain made sure that none of the agricultural undertakings in the colonies were capable of competing with any sphere of production in the metropolitan country. Trade with foreign powers was prohibited and that between individual Spanish colonies was only permitted within strictly defined limits.

Only two ships a year, with cargoes not exceeding a set value, set sail from the Philippines for the Mexican port of Acapulco bringing back silver to pay the salaries of the Spanish officials resident in the islands and for the purchase of Chinese wares brought over to Manila. The Philippines were not only deprived of any

contact with European states but they were also forbidden to trade with Spain.

In all the Spanish colonies the administrative officials, officers and monks from a wide variety of religious orders were all native-born Spaniards. Many Spaniards arrived in the colonies with the idea of getting rich quick by means of plunder and exploitation of the local population and then returning to Spain to live on their fortunes thus acquired. The descendants of the conquistadores and the early settlers—the Creoles—were soon to become powerful parasitic landowners exerting control over the local population including a relatively large class of half-caste craftsmen and traders who supplied them with whatever wares they might require. However, even the Creoles were given little say in the administration of the colonies (during the whole period of Spanish rule only four of the total 160 vice-roys were Creoles and only 14 of the 602 captains general) and their economic and political rights were restricted.

Opposition to the metropolitan country was to grow up among the Creole population. A Creole intelligentsia, infiltrated to a small extent by half-castes as well, was gradually to emerge and by the eighteenth century had become quite sizable. It voiced the interests of the privileged Creole section of the population which was demanding an extension of its rights, abolition of the restrictions imposed upon it and changes in the country's economic and taxation policy. However, this opposition sought no backing among the popular masses. The struggle of the common people against colonial exploitation was purely spontaneous and the frequent armed uprisings were suppressed with ruthless cruelty. Once Spain had been reduced to the status of a second-rate power after the War of the Spanish Succession, it became much harder for her to maintain the enforced isolation of her colonies and her former monopoly of their trade.

Contraband trade by the other European powers developed on an increasingly wide scale, since it enabled the local merchants to make considerable profits. This led to a decline in the revenue gained by Spain from the colonies. Charles III (1759-1788) made efforts to expand the existing ties with the colonies, and Spanish merchants were granted the right to trade with the colonies from all Spanish ports. However, although during the ten years following his reign the volume of legal trade multiplied sevenfold, a good number of foreign goods were still traded as Spanish ones. Contraband trade increased greatly, and absolutist Spain, who lagged behind her advanced European neighbours, found it more and more difficult to hold on to her extensive colonial possessions.

The Portuguese colonial system was centred on a network of fortified trading posts spreading from the African coast to India

and Macao which had been seized from China. Since they lacked the manpower and wherewithal to administer large territories, the Portuguese made good use of their trading bases and supremacy at sea in order to establish control over the main sea routes to the East and retain a monopoly of the spice trade. They set up a base on the Moluccas, obliging the local population to supply them with the cloves and nutmeg they produced for ridiculously low prices. Their possessions in Malacca enabled the Portuguese to control the trade route from India and the Middle East to China and Malaya, plunder the vessels of other countries and subject them to extortionate requisitions. However, by the seventeenth century Portuguese domination of the East had been undermined by the joint efforts of the Dutch and the British who had already reached the stage of bourgeois development. In the seventeenth century the Portuguese held only a few of their former strongholds, while the majority of their possessions had fallen into the hands of the Dutch. In 1640 the capture of Malacca marked the final demise of Portugal as the leading colonial power in the East.

The Colonial Policy of the East India Companies

The heyday of Spanish and Portuguese colonialism, when colonial policies were dictated by the interests of the ruling classes of these two feudal monarchies, was followed by a period when the colonial policy of the bourgeois class, now asserting itself in the more progressive European states, determined the course of overseas development.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the foundations of a colonial system in keeping with the interests of the powerful commercial bourgeoisie were laid. It is no coincidence that the first steps in this new colonial policy were undertaken by the Netherlands which emerged as an independent state after the bourgeois revolution had freed the country from the rule of absolutist Spain. In 1602 the formation of the Dutch United East India Company after the amalgamation of a number of rival trading companies gave rise to the first large-scale limited company with subscribed capital, which was granted a monopoly of trading rights in the East. Subsequently the Dutch company was to provide a model for other similar companies in particular the English East India Company originally founded in 1600.

In the seventeenth century the Netherlands presented a classical example of a capitalist country and it was not long before that, shoulder to shoulder with the English in a common drive against Spanish and Portuguese colonial supremacy, the Dutch suc-

ceeded in putting an end to Portuguese domination (in 1581 Portugal passed to the Spanish Crown). The Dutch gained possession of many former Portuguese colonies such as the Cape Colony at the southern tip of Africa, outposts in the Persian Gulf, and Malacca in 1640.

An extremely significant prize was the Spice Islands, where the Dutch skilfully turned the hatred of the local population for the Portuguese and the rivalry between the local princedoms to their own advantage. Joint actions undertaken with the English did not lessen the acute rivalry in the competition between the English and Dutch trading companies. After the massacre of the English at Amboina in 1623, the English company was ousted from the spice trade and subsequently from most parts of Indonesia.

The centre of the Dutch colonial empire which grew up in the Far East in the seventeenth century was Java. The Dutch company succeeded in capturing territory in the small coastal princedom of Jakarta, where a new colonial capital, Batavia, was built on the ruins of the former capital. This step marked the beginning of the transformation of the Dutch trading company into a colonial organisation complete with territorial possessions. For several decades the Dutch were obliged to come to terms with large states then existing in Java. Violence and cruel repressive measures to which the population of these weak, backward countries were subjected were to be found side by side with complicated intrigues aimed at instigating clashes and feuds between the local princedoms.

Indonesia in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

In the seventeenth century the most powerful state in Java was Mataram. Since the strong Majapahit Empire had fallen under concerted attack of the vassal princedoms in the coastal regions whose rulers had adopted Islam, Java had consisted of a large number of states carrying on bitter feuds with one another. The majority of these states were later to be united under Mataram, centred on the fertile, densely populated central and eastern parts of the island, which had also been the heart of the culturally advanced and prosperous Java of the Middle Ages. In the seventeenth century the sultan of Mataram adopted the title Susuhunan (he to whom all submit) and continued to extend his power.

In Western Java another fairly strong state by the name of Bantam had emerged by the seventeenth century. As had been

the case with the sultanate of Atjeh in Northern Sumatra, Bantam owed its ascendancy to changes in the main sea routes. So as to keep out of the way of the Portuguese and avoid crippling requisitions merchants from India and the West had by this time started to use a route along the western coast of Sumatra and the Sunda Strait.

In the coastal regions of Sumatra, Kalimantan and other islands power was in the hands of a large number of feudal princedoms. In the interior of these islands tribal society was slowly disintegrating and class society gradually emerging. The colonial regime set up by the Dutch East India Company was instructed to make its main task retention of the monopoly of the export of costly spices and other produce of Indonesia. The Dutch established firm control over these areas chiefly by means of forcing on various of the warring princedoms treaties of alliance and assistance and also by actively supporting various local rulers against popular uprisings or by taking sides in disputes of dynastic succession. It was methods such as these during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that first enabled the Dutch to foist treaties securing them trade and opium monopolies on the local rulers and later to extend the Company's territorial possessions over most of Bantam and Mataram. Dutch interference in dynastic strife in Mataram in the middle of the eighteenth century led to the eventual division of the once powerful princedom into two smaller vassal states Surakarta and Djokjakarta. These two states, which were completely under Dutch control continued to exist throughout the period of Dutch rule.

In the territories which had become Dutch possessions the Company initially employed methods of indirect administration. It did not interfere in administration by the former feudal lords, who had since become little more than vassals and officials in Dutch service and obediently carried out Dutch orders in connection with deliveries of the necessary produce as required. From the eighteenth century onwards they were to organise the introduction of a new crop in local peasant holdings, namely coffee.

Wars against East Indian princedoms outside Java were fought in defence of the existing trade monopoly and so as to prevent penetration of the area by European rivals. As the Dutch continued their territorial expansion and punitive expeditions they finally resorted to forming an army made up of local soldiers, exploiting national and religious differences to their own ends. The Spice Islands were to become the scene of particularly bitter fighting in the Dutch Company's drive to defend its trade monopoly. So as to ensure more effective control over the export of cloves and nutmeg the Dutch permitted these cultures only on two specific islands namely Amboina and Banda. Elsewhere spice

fields were destroyed, and as a result the local population which had long since depended on these crops for its livelihood was condemned to hunger. In order to combat contraband and ensure that spice prices in Europe remained as high as before, the Dutch resorted to wilful destruction of spice crops and this resulted in frequent uprisings among the desperate, starving natives. Punitive expeditions against the people of the Banda islands ended in their almost total extermination. The few survivors who were obliged to flee to the arid mountain regions soon died out from starvation. The Dutch then attempted to set up their own plantations relying on slave labour. The Dutch planters were permitted to go and round up slaves on the adjacent islands, and the slave trade soon became a flourishing concern providing yet another profitable export. The warlords from Sulawesi (Celebes) handed over to the Company the prisoners of war they captured in the course of local feuds with neighbouring rulers, and also their tribesmen. The slaves that were exported to Java were then resold elsewhere at much higher prices.

By the eighteenth century, however, the Dutch East India Company was no longer in a position to defend its trade monopoly and was obliged to make a number of major concessions to England. By means of contraband the British East India Company gradually gained a foothold in Indonesia and soon the fabulous profits of the Dutch Company gave way to a deficit. By issuing new shares and state bonds the Dutch government headed by the Stadholder which had a vested interest in the Company's dealings succeeded for a time in concealing this deficit. The illegal contraband indulged in by the Dutch officials themselves also served to undermine the Dutch trade monopoly. None of the many measures applied were successful in putting an end to this illegal trading. Britain, which by this time had overtaken Holland in its economic development, dealt a number of serious blows to Dutch interests in the course of a series of trade wars. The outcome of the war of 1780-1784 deprived the Dutch of several colonial possessions and gave British ships the right to sail in Indonesian waters. By this time Britain had scored a number of outstanding successes in India and consolidated its trade links with the Middle East and China.

In India the Dutch did not even attempt to compete with the English and French companies installed in the country. They concentrated their efforts merely on maintaining their trading posts on the coast which were important for the export of Indian wares to Indonesia and the Far East.

In their penetration of India, Britain and France pursued policies similar to those of the Dutch (exploiting rivalry between local rulers, recruiting forces of native soldiers or sepoys, conclud-

ing subsidiary agreements, administration with the help of acquiescent local rulers, and territorial expansion so as to turn trading companies into centres of colonial expansion at the expense of local states).

The Fall of the Great Mogul Empire

In the first half of the seventeenth century the economic power of the Great Mogul Empire was still in the ascendant. The unification of most of India under the Moguls and a decrease in feuds between local rulers created favourable conditions for the development of agriculture and crafts and the growth of foreign and internal trade. For the first time different regions of the country started to specialise in particular crops. The substitution of money taxes for taxes in kind was to have a marked effect on the natural economy of the village communes, giving rise as it did to increased commodity-money relations and internal exchange and the appearance of the first manufactories. However the emergence of capitalist elements within the framework of a feudal empire, based on the unification of various peoples achieved by means of force, was bound to prove a slow and tortuous process. A number of features of Indian society such as the self-contained village communes, the caste system, frequent invasions by foreign conquerors all served to hold back capitalist development. As the Mogul Empire extended the frontiers so the exploitation of the main producers, the peasants, was intensified.

The system of military overlords and vassals introduced by the Moguls led to the emergence of a new social group, that of powerful vassals employed as local governors who were to become in practice semi-independent rulers.

Feudal oppression gave rise to frequent spontaneous popular movements against Mogul rule, many of which were of a religious sectarian character. National minorities also rose up against Mogul rule on numerous occasions.

In the seventeenth century a Sikh movement grew up in the Punjab from small beginnings in the preceding century. It attacked the caste system and the feudal exploitation practised by the Moslem overlords. Large sections of the peasantry joined the movement and the idealisation of social patterns based on the commune led the Guru (teacher or leader) of the Sikhs, Govind Singh (1675-1708), to intensify the struggle against the feudal regime in order to set up the "true kingdom", in which all land would belong to the Sikh commune. This revolt against the Mogul Empire which was led by the peasant Banda after the death of Govind was to spread throughout the whole of the Punjab. It was only with great difficulty that the army of the Mogul state succeeded in suppressing the movement, and then only for a time.

Later, when the central power of the state had grown much weaker the military leaders of the Sikhs took advantage of the situation and declared the Punjab independent in 1765 under a Sikh commune (or khalsa). However, when the Punjab succeeded in asserting itself as an independent state the Sikh military leaders (or sirdars) were to set themselves up as powerful landowners after seizing land from the Afghan and Mogul nobles.

The Revolt of the Marathas

The revolt of the Marathas was at one and the same time a popular revolt against the powerful landowners and an attempt by the lesser Maratha landowners to free themselves from the yoke of the Moguls and their vassals. This struggle for independence was led by the talented commander Sivaji Bhonsla, who was able to rally the people to his cause and inspire confidence in them. Relying mostly on the peasantry, Sivaji Bhonsla mustered a competent regular army which was close-knit thanks to its ethnic homogeneity and common aims. By 1674 most of the land inhabited by the Marathas had been freed from foreign rule and Sivaji Bhonsla declared himself the independent ruler of Maharashtra. After the Mogul Moslems had been driven out land taxes were reduced by approximately one-third.

However the Maratha landowners then proceeded to seize the large landed estates of the Moguls and aspire to greater power. Feuds which sprang up after the death of Sivaji facilitated temporary successes of the Moguls against the Marathas. Sivaji's son and heir Sambaji was captured and executed and his small grandson was taken away to the capital of the empire.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century Maharashtra was again declared an independent state. While power was nominally in the hands of Sivaji's descendants, in practice the Marathas were ruled over by the first minister or peshwa and his lineage. It was Poonah, the site of his family home, that was made the new capital of the peshwas. The more powerful landowners, not content with the exploitation of the Maratha peasants, seized extensive new territories. The severely weakened power of the Mogul state was not in a position to contain the Maratha conquests which soon extended from the Indus valley to the Bay of Bengal. On this territory apart from the state of Maharashtra four other Maratha princedoms were set up which formed a confederation presided over by the peshwa.

After the death of the Mogul emperor Aurangzeb (1658-1707) who had asserted Mogul power over most of India and succeeded, temporarily at least, in suppressing the revolts of the Marathas and the Sikhs, the final disintegration of the empire began. The

struggle among his sons for the throne facilitated the secession of various territories with a more or less homogeneous population and the transformation of various local governors and powerful vassals of the Mogul Empire into independent rulers. Not only did independent Maratha princedoms spring up and the Punjab declare its independence but the princedom of Jat was to appear near the very capital of the former empire. In the south the independent states of Hyderabad, Mysore and the Carnatic were proclaimed. Meanwhile in Bengal, while the nominal rule of the Moguls still existed it was the Bengal nabobs who in practice ruled the enormous area.

In 1739 Nadir Shah of Persia invaded the country, capturing and sacking the imperial capital of Delhi, although he failed to bring India under his sway. Then came an attack by the Afghans after they had set up their own independent state under the leadership of Ahmad Shah. These invasions dealt the final blows to the Mogul Empire. The Afghans subjugated the Punjab, Kashmir and considerable territories on the eastern bank of the Indus and captured Delhi.

The Marathas who aspired to supremacy within the shattered empire tried to ward off the Afghan conquerors. After taking Delhi they succeeded in throwing back the Afghans to the far bank of the Indus. However, by turning to his advantage the conflicts between the Moslem sultans and landowners and the Hindu Marathas and with the help of a new army, Ahmad Shah was to prove victorious in the end. However, like Nadir Shah he was unable to gain a firm hold over Indian territory. Most of the territory he seized in the Punjab was that of the Sikhs. Weakened as they were by this long series of wars the Marathas did not succeed in setting up a new dynasty in the Moguls' stead, still they constituted a formidable power well able to defend its independence.

The fall of the Mogul Empire was the outcome of a deep-rooted crisis in this multinational feudal empire. Some of the independent princedoms which emerged as a result, such as Bengal, Hyderabad and Maharashtra could have provided the basis for the formation of national states thus accelerating the development of capitalist social and economic patterns. But such prospects were rudely shattered when the era of European conquests began.

Anglo-French Rivalry and the First Territorial Seizures

Increasing penetration on the part of European traders had already started to influence internal developments within the Mogul Empire some time before its final collapse. In the Ganges

delta on the Malabar and Coromandel coasts a large number of trading posts and forts were set up by the European trading companies. Finding their hands tied in Indonesia, the English turned their attention to India and the Middle East during the first three decades of the seventeenth century. The French East India Company set up on the initiative of Colbert and afforded support from the absolutist monarchy built a number of trading posts centred round a main stronghold in Pondicherry south of Madras. The main centres of the English traders were in Madras and Surat, and near Calcutta. After Bombay had been handed over to the Company in 1668 by King Charles II who received it as part of the dowry of the Portuguese princess Catherine of Braganza, the administrative centre of the English Company on the West coast was transferred there from Surat since Bombay was a more convenient port. Side by side with the English and French trading stations Danish and Norwegian ones were also set up after permission had been granted them to trade by the Great Moguls who themselves had vested interests in the development of foreign trade.

In the middle of the eighteenth century when the central power was already weak, separatist tendencies were on the increase and rivalry between the powerful nobles was rife, the European companies made the most of the situation and started to seize Indian territory. The main rivals in this drive for territorial expansion were the English and French trading companies. At the outset the French scored considerable successes. The resourceful governor of the French trading station Dupleix was the first to employ the tactics evolved by the Dutch. He started to set up an army of native soldiers under the pretext of defending the rights of various feuding nobles and affording them assistance, then obtained permission to station his troops at various strategic points in Indian territory, ensuring that the cost of their upkeep was paid for by the local Indian rulers. These so-called subsidiary treaties had enabled the French by the 1740s to gain control over the large princedoms of Hyderabad and the Carnatic which presented a serious threat to British strongholds in India, in particular to Madras. This situation led to India becoming the arena of the Anglo-French struggle for colonial supremacy. During the War of the Austrian Succession (1740-1748) the British Company with the firm support of the country's now well-consolidated bourgeoisie gained the upper hand over the French, but the rivalry between the two powers was only finally decided by the Seven Years' War (1756-1763). The decisive stage of the war was the capture and subjugation of Bengal. All European colonialists had their eyes on this densely populated province, extremely rich in natural resources. The British Company had 15 large trading posts in

Bengal, the main one being in Calcutta where there were 150 warehouses. The extortion of Indian wares and craftsmanship at rates extremely detrimental to local interests served to rapidly undermine the Bengali economy. The Nabob Suraj-ud Dowlah who came to the throne in 1756 attempted to consolidate Bengal's independence and put an end to the threat of British domination. After opening hostilities and capturing Calcutta, the Nabob tried to make use of Anglo-French rivalry and seek help from the French. English troops sent out from Madras under the command of the influential colonial commander Robert Clive well-versed both in the military arts and the skills of diplomatic intrigue and bribery succeeded in beating back the Nabob's forces.

The Rape of Bengal

However, the Nabob's troops put up strong resistance. Clive concluded a secret treaty with Mir Jafar, one of the Nabob's chief military commanders, the latter agreeing to help Clive in return for the Nabob's throne. At the battle of Plassey (1757) 900 British soldiers and two thousand sepoys routed the 90,000-strong army of the Nabob, thanks to superior arms and military organisation and the treacherous blow dealt to the Nabob's cause by Mir Jafar. Suraj-ud Dowlah was taken prisoner and later executed. The reckless plunder of the Bengali capital of Murshidabad brought the East India Company an enormous revenue of 37 million pounds, 21 million of which went to line the pockets of Clive, other officers and company officials.

Mir Jafar was installed on the throne, which meant that the British Company now had a free hand. Trade in Indian raw materials, yarn and fabrics developed apace. The Company removed various nabobs who incurred their displeasure, on each occasion securing enormous bribe money from the aspiring candidate. The attempt on the part of Nabob Mir Kasim to obviate the illegal tariff-free trade engaged in by the Company and its agents led to an open conflict. Mir Kasim supported by the Nabob of the Oudh principedom and the Great Mogul Shah Alam II decided to curb the colonialists' activity by force of arms. However, the united Indian forces were routed and the Great Mogul who was taken prisoner was obliged to present the Company in 1765 with a license giving them the right among other things to collect taxes and maintain an army in Bengal. Such patterns of dual administration were made wide use of by the Company throughout Bengal. The task of collecting taxes was entrusted to tax-farmers who gathered in enormous sums for the Company, with which it was able to cover its military and administrative expenses and

buy up Indian wares at very low prices to be sold for an enormous profit in Europe. Over a period of ten years the Company made 27 million pounds profit by means of this commerce.

The plunder of Bengal and the exploitation of the local population there reduced the country to a state of abject poverty. The tax-farmers squeezed taxes out of the peasants quite ruthlessly. As a result, many of the peasants were ruined and driven off their land.

The local craftsmen who were obliged to sell their wares to the Company's agents at very low prices were also condemned to ruin. The Company's trade monopoly encroached on the sphere of activity of the local merchants soon making it impossible for them to continue to gain a living, although at the early stage of foreign penetration the presence of the foreigners had brought them added profits. A widespread famine wiped out almost a third of the population of Bengal in 1771, while in that same year the Company succeeded in securing still larger profits than usual. The plundering of India was to prove an important factor in the process of primary accumulation in England, thus serving to accelerate the course of the country's industrial revolution.

By the end of the 1780s the results of the advance of the English textile industry were to make themselves felt in Bengal. The Company cut down on its purchases of fabrics in India, bringing about the ruin of thousands of weavers. Imports of Indian yarn were soon cut down as well. Impoverished craftsmen returned to the villages in desperation, prepared to rent land on any terms, however crippling. This contributed more than ever to the intensification of feudal exploitation. The famine in Bengal, the Company's inability to pay the British government the fixed annual dues of 400,000 pounds, and the struggle waged by sections of the commercial and industrial bourgeoisie not connected with the Company against the latter's privileges all contributed in varying measure to the direct intervention of the British Parliament. The Regulating Act of 1774 provided for the appointment of a Governor-General, to whom the governors of Madras and Bombay were to be held responsible. The Governor-General and the members of his council were appointed by Parliament. Thus the Company, while retaining its monopoly as a trading organisation and its territorial possessions, was now to a certain extent subject to parliamentary supervision. The first man to be appointed Governor-General was Warren Hastings. His reforms did not ease the burden of the Bengal population. Ample scope for speculation and illegal profiteering on the part of civil servants and the Company's staff still abounded.

Resistance in Mysore and the Maratha Confederation

In the south by means of subsidiary treaties the Company succeeded in bleeding dry and then virtually annexing the Carnatic to its other possessions. It also attempted to take over some of the Maratha princedoms, but the first military effort in this direction was effectively repulsed. The Company saw a threat to its expansionist plans in the princedom of Mysore, which during the reign of Sultan Hyder-Ali had become much stronger both politically and economically. Mysore was not only unwilling to make concessions to the Company, but thought that in alliance with the Marathas and with the French help it might succeed in driving out the British from their lands.

The French fleet soon appeared off the coast of Mysore. Meanwhile the British Trading Company was unable to count on help from Britain since she was at the time involved in the American War of Independence in which the colonists were supported by France, Spain and the Netherlands. Once again fanning feudal contradictions to serve their own purposes, the Company succeeded in winning over to their side one of the largest Maratha princedoms Gwalior with the promise of some territory near Delhi, and then concluded a treaty with the Maratha confederation in 1782. Mysore continued its struggle against the British under the leadership of Hyder-Ali's son Tipu who succeeded him on the throne and who nursed a bitter hatred against the English. Once the war with the USA, France and Spain was over (in 1783) and the French fleet had been recalled the British were able to settle accounts with Mysore. Mysore was as yet intact and subsequent reforms introduced by Tipu, which served to put a check on feudal patterns of exploitation, made the princedom a more close-knit state. Tipu meanwhile had not given up hope of driving out the British and attempted to persuade other princedoms to support him in this venture. Hoping that clashes of British and French interests would play into his hands Tipu relied for help on revolutionary France. The British East India Company, which meanwhile had succeeded in cutting Mysore off from the rest of the continent, made use of the services of the vassal princedom of Hyderabad, representing the consolidation of Mysore to the other Indian princedoms as a threat to their own power, and promising them parts of Mysore if it was defeated. It took two costly battles to break Mysore's resistance, after which the princedom was exposed to ruthless attacks by the united forces of the East India Company, the Marathas and Hyderabad in 1790. After two years of fighting a treaty was forced on Tipu, obliging him to surrender half of his princedom. Nevertheless what remained of Mysore was

still independent and this independence Tipu and his people were still firmly resolved to defend.

After the French revolution, when Anglo-French rivalry for supremacy in Asia became much more acute, the British became greatly alarmed at the growing French influence in Eastern Hyderabad, Mysore and the Maratha princedoms. Tipu tried to conclude an alliance with revolutionary France and the British used this attempt as a pretext for attacking Mysore once more, again with the help of Hyderabad. In this unequal struggle Mysore suffered a decisive defeat. In the course of the heroic defence of the capital of Seringapatam Tipu fell and the city was subsequently sacked by the invaders, who seized yet another large portion of the princedom. A powerless six-year-old was placed on the throne, a member of the Hyder-Ali dynasty which had been overthrown long before.

Although a considerable part of India still remained independent, by the end of the eighteenth century Britain was in possession of all key positions in the country and had succeeded in ousting all possible European rivals. The enormous sub-continent had become a British colony.

China in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

In 1644 Manchurian nobles had seized Peking, proclaiming the Manchurian prince as Emperor of China and founder of the new Manchu or Ch'ing dynasty (1644-1911). This event ushered in a long train of wars which lasted right down to 1683. The resistance of the nobles in the south who had attempted once again to take refuge and lie low on the far bank of the Yangtze had been broken by 1647 but the main core of the resistance movement was now the peasantry and the non-Chinese peoples that lived to the south of the Yangtze and in the Sinkiang Valley. The most effective resistance was put up by the peoples of the south-western regions, who fought not so much in support of the Ming dynasty as for their independence against the oppressive rule of the central state apparatus of the Empire. Bitter fighting also went on in the south-east where the Chinese peasantry fought side by side with the peoples of the coastal regions and the island of Taiwan. However, mass treachery on the part of the Chinese nobles and the lack of co-ordination between the various uprisings enabled the Manchurians to subjugate the whole of what is now Central and Southern China.

The Manchurians did not introduce any changes into the social structure which had existed under the Ming dynasty, nor did they deprive the Han landowners of any of their revenues

and privileges. The stratification of the peasantry which had started towards the end of the Ming era, led to the emergence of a class of petty and medium landowners, who by the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth century had come to form a distinct social group, whose small and medium landed estates were private property. The former feudal administrative apparatus also remained intact, likewise the complicated exams required for promotion in rank which ensured that all offices remained the province of the powerful landowners. A considerable part of the privately-owned land was now in the hands of the hereditary Manchurian nobility, military commanders and Buddhist priests. While a section of the peasantry also owned private plots, the vast majority were either landless or did not own enough to keep themselves and their families. While formally they remained free tenant farmers, in practice they were bound to the land by debts and various other obligations. There were also serfs who worked state lands (the revenue from these went to the upkeep of the court and the National Guard, etc.) but these lands constituted an insignificant fraction of the country's cultivated territory.

An important role in the exploitation of the peasants was played by the money-lenders whose activities served to hold back the development of Chinese agriculture. The emergence of commodity-money relations as a permanent feature of village life, while not giving rise to capitalist relations of production because of the existing wide-scale village crafts and the prevalence of natural economy in rural areas, paved the way for the practice of wide-scale money-lending. Capitalist production relations were also slow to develop in the towns. The Ch'ing (Manchu) monarchy merely introduced strict regimentation into rural life but on the other hand there were important changes in the towns to restrict the activities of the merchants and urban craftsmen who strongly resisted Manchurian rule. Apart from introducing extremely strict regimentation (which of itself was not enough to lead to a decline in urban development, as illustrated by the history of Japan under the Tokugawas) the Manchurian nobles drastically cut down their economic and political independence, thus holding back the development of mining and other industries. Although the political stability that prevailed during the reign of the energetic ruler, the Emperor K'ang-hsi (1662-1722), gave rise to a certain advance in crafts and trade (for example the textile and china industries), all such advances were made in spite of the constant restrictions, heavy taxation, compulsory deliveries and competition from state-owned enterprises. The guild organisations were incorporated into the state apparatus and soon carried out nothing but fiscal and police functions.

Trade was in an even sorrier plight, for apart from increased taxation there were now the added obstacles of competition from state trading organisations and monopolies (including that of foreign trade), internal tariffs, etc.

In these conditions money-lending also developed on a wide scale in urban life and commerce. The practices of the money-lenders and tax-farmers also served as a brake on economic development. Many towns degenerated into little more than military and administrative centres, where the residences of the Manchurian and Chinese nobles and the garrisons of the Manchurian troops were situated. The townspeople who depended on crafts and trade for their livelihood were now pushed into the background, since strict government control had been introduced, a phenomenon which could in the main be explained by the fact that the majority of them were Chinese, who in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries under the rule of the Ch'ing dynasty were regarded as second-class citizens. The Manchu monarchs strove to turn the numerically weak Manchurian population into a separate military-cum-administrative caste to provide the main bulwark of support for their power, making Manchuria the most privileged area of the country to which Chinese were not even given right of entry. Contact between the Manchurians and the Chinese was discouraged as far as possible, while strong attempts at assimilation were made. This campaign was however doomed to failure from the outset, since the Chinese were much more numerous and culturally advanced than the Manchurians; it served as a brake on economic advance.

The whole system of state administration was channelled to the interests of the Ch'ing emperor, the Manchurian nobility and the army. The main bastion of Ch'ing support at the end of the seventeenth and during the first half of the eighteenth century was the Manchurian army, the so-called Eight Banners, which were garrisoned in the empire's main towns and along its borders. The officers and soldiers of this army were allotted plots of state land which could not be alienated. This led to entrenchment of the economic differences between the Chinese and the Manchurians: the latter were granted land in return for service while land belonging to the Chinese was privately owned. In this situation the gradual merging of the two groups found expression (as far as agriculture was concerned) in the gradual transfer of the inalienable or "banner" lands into the hands of the Chinese nobles and powerful landowners. Meanwhile more and more Chinese and Mongols were being taken into the Manchurian army. Apart from the "Eight Banners", provincial "Green Banners" consisting of Chinese soldiers also came into being, although they were undisciplined and ineffective.

Relying for their main support on the Manchurian army, which, although its interests had little in common with the interests of the majority of the Chinese population, was the only effective armed force at the time, the Manchurian emperors restored the former Chinese state apparatus reserving all the high posts for the highly exclusive Manchurian minority, leaving the Chinese no room for advancement. This whole system was presided over by the Emperor, who enjoyed unlimited power. Under him was a State Council and a State Chancellery (staffed in the main by Manchurians) and six ministerial departments (for ceremonies, finance, ranks, social administration, justice and military affairs), while the central organ of state control operated on a separate basis. In the provinces the Emperor was represented by governors and the various ministries by inspectors.

What was formally a centralised system, in practice was far from being so, mainly because of the poor communications within the country. The provincial governors ruled like independent petty princes while the administrative officials were engaged in the main in various types of extortion. The latter were all taken from the ranks of the nobility and the promotion in the administrative hierarchy depended on a complicated system of examinations.

The ideological atmosphere of the eighteenth century and the training received by administrative officials came to be permeated more and more with the spirit of Confucianism. This teaching usually came to the fore during periods when the feudal bureaucracy was in the ascendant, when the popular masses were subjected to wide-scale exploitation by the state. Confucianism in the form which had been adopted after the Chu Hsi reforms was made the official state ideology. Propagating submissive obedience to superiors as the supreme ethical principle, this teaching was once again to prove most acceptable to China's feudal rulers. The Confucian conceptions of the immutability of society and the desirability of submission pervade the official literature of the period, the education system and state policies. At that time all opposition currents without exception—whether directly or indirectly—were critical of Confucian dogma. A bitter struggle was waged in the spheres of literature and scholarship, in which the Manchurians and their supporters were to gain the upper hand much later than was the case in the military struggle, and indeed were never to prove completely successful. Progressive thinkers of that time, despite the great variety of their philosophical ideas, all protested in one way or another against Manchurian oppression of the Chinese and the economic and political oppression to which the popular masses were subjected. As a result their strictly philosophical ideas are of interest as representing an example of the

gradual advance of progressive ideas in mediaeval Chinese philosophy.

The reign of K'ang-hsi saw the final consolidation of the Ch'ing Empire and of its social, economic and cultural patterns. A streamlining of the taxation system and as a result a temporary curtailment of the number of illegal requisitions and a gradual decline in internal wars gave rise to a certain economic recovery and growth in agricultural output, together with a revival of internal trade and urban crafts. Although these processes took place against a background of strict regimentation and harsh exploitation, nevertheless by the end of the seventeenth century a marked improvement in the country's position was to be observed. This was accompanied by financial recovery, replenishment of the state treasury, urban expansion and cultural progress.

During the latter half of the seventeenth century increased contacts with Europe were established and various European inventions were adopted, particularly in the sphere of armaments and navigation, which were to prove important in connection with the consolidation of Manchurian power in China. The same end was pursued in the wide campaign for the Manchurian nobility to acquaint itself with Chinese culture, which during K'ang-hsi's reign even became part of official policy. The cultural advance achieved by China's conquerors (despite the ban on their mixing with the Chinese) was designed not only to obstruct Manchurian cultural acceptance of the Chinese but also, in the opinion of the emperor, to ensure that none of the higher echelons of the state apparatus were staffed with educated Chinese officials. The dominant position of the Manchurians for which K'ang-hsi wished to provide an "intellectual" foundation gave added weight to their privileged position in the courts, where for identical crimes stricter punishments were meted out to Chinese offenders. Side by side with this campaign a policy of "Manchurianising" the Chinese was pursued. Thus, among other things, the Chinese were forced to wear pig-tails like the Manchurians.

Increased political and economic stability furthered the growth of foreign trade and the expansion of overseas contacts, which in turn determined the opportunities for pursuing aggressive foreign policy that were now open to the feudal Ch'ing Empire. Foreign trade routes led both south through Canton, and north through Mongolia. In the south trade was carried on with Arab, Indian and West European merchants, while in the north there was trade with Russian merchants and state enterprises. Russia exported glass, cloth and fur and imported Chinese tea, cane-sugar, china, etc. Trade was carried on by itinerant caravans since there was no permanent Russian representative in China. In the south, on the other hand, the Portuguese (in Macao), the English (in

Canton), the French (in Ningpo) and the Dutch were already firmly established. Obviating any form of control, merchants from these countries traded with the Chinese hand in glove with missionaries. In an effort to stop the West Europeans interfering in any way in the internal affairs of state, the government forbade them to trade with anyone but representatives of the company that enjoyed the official trade monopoly, "Co-hong".

This policy pursued by the imperial government hindered the expansion of diplomatic and cultural contacts and made normal diplomatic relations impossible. Dutch, Portuguese and other embassies were obliged to leave the country empty-handed. This policy of isolation was also to the serious detriment of Russo-Chinese relations, although on the whole relations between these two large countries developed somewhat differently. After their failure to establish diplomatic relations, for some time the West European powers abandoned their attempts to come to terms with the emperors. Russian missions led by Boikov (1654-1656) and Perfiyev (1658) also returned empty-handed. However Spafary's embassy (1675-1677) which ended in an audience with the Emperor, although not leading to the conclusion of any specific agreement, to a certain extent paved the way for future developments in this direction, since both sides expressed their interest in normalising relations.

By this period the local population of South and Eastern Siberia had recognised Russia's supremacy, but as early as in the second half of the seventeenth century this was threatened by aggressive aspirations on the part of the Ch'ing dynasty, particularly in regard to the regions bordering on the privileged part of the Empire, namely Manchuria. In 1684 a large contingent of Manchurian forces complete with artillery and West European military experts crossed the Empire's northern border and moved north to the river Amur where they besieged the Cossack fortress at Albazin, the centre of the Russian settlements on the Amur. Frequent assaults were repulsed by the small garrison and on one occasion when the town was actually destroyed the inhabitants quickly rebuilt it. In 1686 the Manchurian forces built a rampart round the town, but still were unable to capture it. While these hostilities were in progress yet another Russian embassy, led this time by Golovin, came to China to start a further series of trade negotiations despite all the obstacles placed in its path by the Manchus. The failure of the special crack troops to rout the Cossack garrison at Albazin obliged the Emperor to adopt a more realistic approach to the proposals of his northern neighbour and appoint representatives to start negotiations with Golovin. These negotiations took place in an extremely tense atmosphere since while they were in progress the Emperor had a 15,000-strong army

concentrated outside Nerchinsk, but nevertheless by August 27, 1689, the treaty of Nerchinsk between Russia and China had been signed, which dealt not only with territorial questions and the treatment of deserters on both sides of the border but also with trade relations between the two countries. This Russo-Chinese treaty made possible a normalisation of relations between the two powers.

Russia accepted this agreement since normal relations with her immediate neighbour were indispensable. The need to establish trade and diplomatic relations with Russia was recognised by the Ch'ing emperors in subsequent years as well: while cutting China off as much as possible from contact with Western Europe, trading, negotiations and an exchange of ambassadors with Moscow continued. Further two treaties were signed (at Burinsk and Kyakhta in 1727 and 1728) which clarified frontier disputes in a number of places that had not been touched on in the Nerchinsk treaty and laid down rules for trading procedure and diplomatic exchange. The first permanent, though only semi-official, Russian legation was to appear in Peking at this time—a religious mission which also carried out diplomatic and trading functions. Its staff made important contributions to the study of China and to the development of Russo-Chinese relations. Based on principles of geographical proximity and mutual advantage, trade between the two countries continued to expand until the mid-eighteenth century.

In order to further their expansionist ambitions, the Manchurian and Chinese nobles now turned their attention westwards. In 1691 the Mongolian princes of the Khalkha tribes recognised Chinese sovereignty. In 1715 Manchurian troops attacked the Oirat-Jungar Khanate (in the modern province of Sinkiang). This unleashed a grim struggle which was to last till the 1750s and in the course of which the Ch'ing troops ousted the Jungars from Tibet and subjected this province to their control as well, after which a Chinese garrison was set up in the capital of Lhasa. These wars marked the beginning of a whole chain of expeditions of conquest. Whereas the wars of the late 17th and early 18th century (during the reign of K'ang-hsi) did not serve to undermine the feudal empire, their sequel under Emperor Yung Ch'eng (1723-1735) and in particular Ch'ien Lung (1736-1796) together with senseless extravagance in construction projects and court ceremony, curtailment of foreign trade and intensified reaction in social administration, exacerbated internal contradictions and gave rise to much unrest. The first signs of weakness in the military-feudal machinery of the Ch'ing state were to appear at the beginning of the eighteenth century. In the opening years of his reign Yung Ch'eng purchased the mortgaged lands formerly

owned by the officers and soldiers of the Manchurian "Eight Banners" Army and then distributed them among Manchurian officers and soldiers in return for services rendered. This served to consolidate the army to some extent, since the extension of rights accorded to the military council enhanced the position of the military leaders in the state administrative network. At that period the drive to intensify the centralisation of the Empire led to the banishment of European Jesuit missionaries and restrictions on the activities of European traders. Yung Chêng's policy was pursued by his successor Ch'ien Lung, during whose reign expansionist foreign policy was still more marked than before and reaction became still more deeply entrenched. This in turn gave rise to discontent among the Chinese peasants who had to bear the burden of these wars, and to resistance on the part of the non-Chinese peoples who had recently been incorporated into the Empire and of those whose traditional autonomy had been rudely abolished. The Manchurian assimilation drives were accompanied by heavier taxation.

The wars against the Oirat-Jungar Khanate were waged even more fiercely in Ch'ien Lung's reign. Openly bent on a war of extermination, the Ch'ing troops succeeded by 1757 in capturing Jungaria, which led a large part of the population to seek refuge in Central Asia. Chinese and Manchurians from the central part of the Empire were resettled in Sinkiang so as to strengthen Ch'ing control over the area inhabited by a foreign people hostile to the central government. Ten years after this victory in the west, the Burmese kingdom of Ava was attacked (1766, and again in 1769-1770) but this expedition ended in a defeat for the Ch'ing armies as did the subsequent campaign against Vietnam (1788-1790). By the second half of the eighteenth century the military might of the Ch'ing Empire had been seriously undermined. Forty years were required before the nomad khanates were finally overcome and wars with the developed feudal states of Indochina resulted in rapid defeats for the Empire. Finally Ch'ien Lung decided to attack his weak neighbour Nepal (1792) which was then embroiled in a war with Tibet. The strong resistance put up by this small mountainous country was broken and Nepal became a vassal of China.

The costly wars waged by Ch'ien Lung extended the frontiers of the Empire to include sparsely populated, arid and mountainous regions which brought little benefit to China's economy. The construction of extravagant palaces also absorbed a large part of state funds. The peasants who had been drained by requisitions and army recruitment and the non-Chinese peoples (who occupied more than half the Empire) who were subjected to still heavier taxation and stricter assimilation drives by the Ch'ing

emperors than by their predecessors found themselves in an extremely difficult position. The impoverished peasantry was obliged to sell its small private plots to the big and lesser landowners who soon came to own between 50 and 60 per cent of the land. More often than not the tenant farmers bound to their masters' land were not in a position to pay any rent and productivity in agriculture showed no signs of improvement. An attempt on the part of the state to check this growing impoverishment of the main body of the tax-payers (a decree was proclaimed in 1786 to the effect that those plots purchased from the impoverished peasants be returned) did little to improve the situation. Landowners and money-lenders also proceeded to buy up the plots of the impoverished peasants in areas with non-Chinese populations where particularly cruel methods were employed. The local lords or in some places even clan hierarchies were replaced by Manchurian officials of the central government who held the local inhabitants in great contempt and made no attempt to understand their customs and traditions.

The situation was less serious in the towns and among the urban traders and craftsmen. The enormous Empire complete with its army, administrative apparatus and unified legal system had soon come to provide a stable home market. Trade and industry expanded in the towns which grew considerably. The ban on free trade with the Europeans which had been introduced in 1757 and applied to the whole of the Empire except Macao, meant that the home market was exclusively in the hands of Chinese merchants and also led to a considerable restriction of foreign trade. Although hampered by the strict control of the feudal state apparatus, private manufacturers employing wage labour gradually appeared, trade expanded and commodity-money relations penetrated all spheres of rural production and spread to the new subject territories as well as those areas inhabited by non-Chinese peoples where the policy of mass assimilation provided ample opportunities for the growth of Chinese trade and usury. Elements of the capitalist mode of production started to appear in the towns but the feudal state was by no means weak as yet and the whole of Chinese society was still modelled on exclusively feudal patterns.

In the complex, contradictory conditions obtaining in the seventeenth century, Chinese art and culture were to exhibit a certain artificial intricacy and pretentiousness which reflected the attempts of the Manchurian ruling clique, which had made no new contribution to Chinese cultural traditions, to set itself apart and underline its distinctive culture as a ruling class. In the eighteenth century science was notable for compilation on a large scale; the literature of the period was notable above all for short

stories in the vernacular and tales of ghosts and marvels. A predilection for stylish refinement was to be observed although certain authors at this time were producing realistic works as well. In the fine arts and architecture a decorative style with abundant ornament and intricate composition prevailed. Little cultural advance was achieved within the confines of this "closed" country.

The critical situation in the rural areas and among the non-Chinese peoples made much less impact on the towns which were subjected to permanent surveillance from the centralised state apparatus, and this factor was to determine the nature of the class struggle in China in the eighteenth century. This struggle consisted in the main of isolated though frequent uprisings among the non-Chinese peoples and an organised campaign of the Chinese peasants led by secret peasant organisations, in which landowning and urban elements were to play no significant role. The centralisation of the class of landowners that had been established by this time and the relative stability in the towns meant that the main masses of the discontented peasantry relied on their own resources and employed their own forms of organisation and tactics in their struggle.

Armed uprisings were the main expressions of the struggle waged by the non-Chinese peoples against the all-pervading assimilation campaign decreed by the emperors. The most important of these included the Miao and Yao uprisings of 1735, 1739-1740, 1795-1799, the uprisings of the non-Chinese peoples in Szechwan in 1772, of the Dungans and Salars in 1783, of the Moslems in Kansu in the same year and of the native population in Sinkiang in 1826-1827.

The peasant secret societies were to play an active role later during the last quarter of the eighteenth century, when conditions had become particularly burdensome for the peasants. Traditional religious societies—such as the White Lotus (Pai-lien chiao)—started to reappear, and new ones sprang up such as the Association of Elder Brothers and the Triad. These secret societies, apart from political aims (in this case the overthrow of the Ch'ing and the restoration of the Ming dynasty), set themselves the goal of moral self-perfection and organised help for the needy among their members, etc. The discipline and conspiratorial tactics of these societies displayed a high level of organisation. The most influential among them was Triad, centred mainly in the southern coastal areas and supported by the merchant class.

Apart from their regular everyday activities these secret societies organised a number of major uprisings: in Taiwan (1786-1788) under the leadership of the Triad and in the Shantung and Honan provinces during the seventies and eighties under the leadership of the White Lotus. A mass uprising was instigated by the

White Lotus society in 1796 in the central and western regions of the country, where opposition to the Manchurians and the feudal landowners was particularly strong. Attempts by the Manchurian army to quell the uprising failed and it was the forces of the Chinese lesser and medium landowners which finally succeeded in putting down the insurgents in 1805. However, in 1813 one of the branches of the White Lotus society again organised a popular revolt. At the same time guerilla activities spread in the coastal regions of the southern part of the Empire.

At the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century China was hit by a severe agrarian crisis, made still more acute by uprisings among the non-Chinese peoples and the struggle of the peasant secret societies. This situation served to undermine the central power and the rulers of individual provinces became virtually independent. Numerous large-scale wars unleashed during the second half of the eighteenth century all ended in defeat. Diplomatic and commercial activity on the part of the West European powers expanded considerably in these conditions and more resolute efforts were made to find openings in the Chinese market for European and American wares. The most active of the powers concerned was England, which by that time was the most advanced industrial and trading nation among the European powers. However, her special missions with this end in view (1792-1793 and 1816) made no headway. Meanwhile the expansion of both English and American trade in China, in particular the opium trade, made imperative the consolidation of these powers' positions in the country at the expense of Chinese sovereignty. The appetites of the colonialists were growing apace but a "way into" China was indispensable for their activities and this the Ch'ing rulers made every effort to deny them.

The Crisis in the Ottoman Empire

At the beginning of the seventeenth century the Ottoman Empire still represented a formidable power and continued to pursue its aggressive policy of aggrandisement both in Europe and the Middle East. However, defeats, first at the hands of the Austrians and the Hungarians in 1664, and then of a European coalition (consisting of Austria, Russia, Venetia and Poland) deprived the Empire of a considerable number of its subject territories, by the treaties of Karlowitz and Constantinople. In the eighteenth century the Ottoman Empire was obliged to adopt defensive tactics and in the course of that century was forced to make more and more territorial and economic concessions.

This decline in its military might was bound up with the crisis and disintegration in the Empire's system of military vassalage and among the janissaries. The fief-holders gradually became powerful landowners and lost interest in participation with their cavalry in the imperial wars. The spread of commodity-money relations, the development of trading with foreign merchants who brought with them luxury goods from all corners of the globe to supply the Sultan's court and the upper echelons of the feudal hierarchy, were all made possible through sale of the fruits of the peasants' and craftsmen's labours. This in its turn led to intensified exploitation of the peasants and a proliferation of requisitions and taxes. As a result, agriculture soon began to decline. The lot of the subject peoples of the Empire was particularly hard, since they were completely at the mercy of the Turkish feudal lords and administrative officials, and were exposed to the caprices and impositions of both their own and the Turkish nobles. The Christian peoples inhabiting the Balkans were oppressed as religious and national minorities and were also subjected to feudal patterns of economic exploitation.

East-West trade through the agency of middlemen was to give rise to the emergence of an influential comprador bourgeoisie in the large coastal towns of the Empire, which consisted in the main of Greeks and Armenians. Manufactories also sprang up in the ports. However, the completely arbitrary rule of the Sultan, which meant that there was no security either for the most powerful state officials or the emergent bourgeoisie coupled with the impoverishment of the mass of the peasantry, served to hold back the consolidation of capitalist economic patterns.

In the eighteenth century the European states succeeded in turning their former privileges—capitulations, granted them as the Sultan might think fit when he started to take an interest in the development of foreign trade—into reliable guarantees of extraterritorial rights for their merchants and their right to expand trade. European wares soon threatened the livelihood of local craftsmen and the existence of Turkish manufactories. The compradors who made their profits as trading intermediaries had a vested interest in promoting the infiltration of foreign capital. The janissaries also started to compete with the petty traders and craftsmen. These professional foot soldiers had earlier been exclusively tributary sons of Christians who were converted to Islam and then brought up from an early age as fanatical believers loyal to the Sultan. They were not allowed to marry and have their own families and lived according to a strict garrison regime, receiving large salaries and being exempted from all taxation. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, however, the janissaries lost interest in their military role. Many of them set up

house and started to engage in trade and crafts while continuing not to pay taxes. The growth of this particular social category resulted to a large extent from the appearance of a second generation. Selling janissary patents soon became an accepted practice. Meanwhile the janissary corps gradually lost its military aura and was soon little more than a praetorian guard, presenting a danger to the Sultan himself. Mutiny among the janissaries was now an increasingly common occurrence, as they came to demand and in many cases procure the dismissal of unpopular commanders.

The intensification of feudal exploitation and the growing taxes that served to undermine the feudal economic system, which could not be substituted by capitalist patterns because of the specific conditions obtaining in Turkey, led to a concerted movement of protest among the popular masses. In 1730 an uprising of the urban masses broke out in the capital: it was led by a former sailor Patron-Khalil and it took the authorities several weeks to suppress it. Meanwhile spontaneous peasant revolts also multiplied. The first seeds of a national liberation struggle were now to be discerned among the oppressed peoples, particularly those of the Balkan peninsula. These anti-feudal and liberation movements were also directed against the upper hierarchy of the Moslem clergy, which not only sanctified the rule of the Sultan and his nobles but also represented one of the Empire's major groups of landowners, owning enormous estates which were not subject to any taxation. These factors added a religious sectarian element to the struggle as well.

The economic and political decline of the Sublime Porte left the way open for the separatist aspirations of the more powerful nobles and local governors which accelerated the downfall of the Empire still further. The weaker the Empire became, the easier it was for the European powers to promote their economic penetration and seize various Ottoman territories.

After the Russo-Turkish wars of the eighteenth century which culminated in that of 1768-1774, Russia secured access to the Black Sea from which Turkish coastal possessions had long barred her. The Treaty of Kuchuk-Kainarji restored to Russia the lands situated between the Dnieper and the Bug, and made the Crimea an independent state, later to be annexed by Russia. Russian trading vessels were granted the freedom to sail the Black Sea and through the Bosphorus. Meanwhile the Tsars, with the firm backing of the gentry and merchant class, dreamt of extensive conquests and of establishing their control over the Bosphorus and even Constantinople itself. These aspirations were to clash with the interests of other European powers, above all England and France, who themselves counted on subjugating the

whole of the multinational Ottoman Empire and engaged in fierce rivalry as they gradually penetrated its various parts. The conflicting interests and rivalry between the European powers within this Empire, side by side with its strategic importance in the context of long-term plans for expansion in Asia and Africa gave rise to a complex series of problems which came to be referred to as the "Eastern Question".

The more far-sighted representatives of the feudal hierarchy tried to consolidate the Empire by means of military and administrative reforms. However, reforms of this nature tentatively introduced by Sultan Selim III (1789-1807) and the talented administrator and military commander Bairakdar Pasha were quite ineffective.

Chapter Five

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

Causes of the Revolution

In the summer of 1788 there was a particularly bad harvest, after the crops had been ruined in many areas, and this was followed by an unusually hard winter. Peasant uprisings broke out in a number of provinces in the autumn and winter of that year, continuing into 1789. The peasants, driven to desperation by hunger and poverty, broke open granaries, shared out the corn, and forced grain dealers to sell them grain at prices they could afford or at "honest prices". The bread shortage also caused widespread unrest in the towns. The authorities quelled the uprisings by force, but they kept on breaking out first in one place, then in another.

What was afoot? Why was France in the grip of such widespread popular strife? After all, it was not the first time the people had been inflicted by bad harvests and natural calamities. Yet previously the authorities had been able to curb popular discontent; in 1788 and 1789 they were not.

The years 1787-1789 were also marked by an industrial and commercial crisis. Many peasants who had been supplementing their earnings by working at manufactories during the winter or going to the towns to take temporary building or other work were now deprived of these opportunities. The towns and highways were thronged with paupers and tramps.

Similar setbacks in the manufactories, construction work and trade had occurred before, so why was it that in 1788-1789 a spirit of unrest reigned throughout the land and there was constant talk of the need and indeed imminence of stupendous change?

Neither the critical situation in industry and commerce, nor the bad harvest of 1788 were the main reasons behind the revo-

lutionary crisis which developed in France at this period. They only served to spark off a crisis which had been a long time in the making. The basic causes of this revolutionary situation had much deeper roots.

The most important factor which gave rise to nation-wide discontent with the existing order was the fact that the prevailing feudal absolutist social patterns were no longer compatible with the country's economic, social and political stage of development.

Approximately 99 per cent of the French population was made up of the so-called third estate while the privileged classes, consisting of the nobility and the clergy, made up the remaining one per cent. Yet it was these numerically insignificant privileged classes that held sway throughout the land. They took no part in production, living off the peasants and lining their pockets from the Exchequer and constituted the main source of support for the monarch.

The third estate did not represent a homogeneous class. It included both the economically powerful bourgeoisie with aspirations to political power and the peasantry which made up the vast bulk of the population, the hard-pressed slaves of feudal exploitation harassed by endless requisitions which served to line the pockets of the landowners, the clergy and the monarchy. Finally there were the town poor—the impoverished workers and craftsmen deprived of any rights and leading a wretched existence. The interests and goals of these various classes did not coincide in all respects, yet they all had one thing in common which served to rally together representatives of the different classes in their opposition to the privileged classes—namely their complete lack of political rights and their desire to change the existing order. Neither the bourgeoisie, nor the peasantry, nor the urban proletariat was prepared to remain reconciled to the rule of the absolutist monarchs and to feudal social patterns. The existing social structure was incompatible with their class interests and the country's economic development.

Whether the members of the third estate were aware of it or not, the next step forward in their country's historical development was at hand, namely the transition from feudalism to capitalism, which at that period represented a more progressive form of society. In the final analysis, it was this transition that all the acute class contradictions of the time were leading up to. It was because these contradictions were so profound and such an inextricable part of the existing social structure that the authorities were not in a position to put an end to or even curb the mounting tide of popular unrest, and revolution in France became historically inevitable.

The Convocation of the States-General

While the popular masses of city and countryside were making it clear that they were unable and unwilling to live as they had in the past, the country's leaders—the monarch and the privileged estates—also showed that they were unable to rule the country as they had hitherto.

The desperate plight of the state treasury resulting from the exorbitant expenditure indulged in by the court and the first two estates, gave rise to an acute financial crisis. The monarchy now found itself without the wherewithal to meet its immediate needs. After a series of unsuccessful attempts to improve the situation the King found himself obliged to summon the States-General—the assembly of representatives of the three estates—which had not been convened in France for 175 years.

Against a background of growing popular discontent in many areas of the country in the spring of 1789 and widespread social unrest the States-General at Versailles was opened on May 5th. King Louis XVI and his entourage hoped that with the help of the States-General they would be able to regain public confidence, quell the unrest and obtain the necessary funds to fill the state coffers. The third estate meanwhile hoped for quite different things from the States-General. It saw in its convocation a hope of major political changes in the country.

From the very outset there was a clash of views in the States-General between the third estate and the privileged classes over the conduct of the session and the voting procedure. On June 17th the representatives of the third estate declared themselves a National Assembly, inviting the representatives of the other estates to join it in this venture. After this bold resolution the National Assembly became the supreme representative and legislative organ of the French people. However, the King, supported by the nobility, refused to acknowledge this step. On June 20th he gave orders for the entrance to the palace where the Assembly was in progress to be locked. But the deputies to the National Assembly were not prepared to obey the monarch's orders. They found an almost empty, spacious room which had formerly been used as a tennis court, and reopened their Assembly there, encouraged to hold out by the cheering crowds of the common people.

At that memorable meeting in the tennis court on June 20th the deputies to the National Assembly solemnly swore that they would not disperse or on any account interrupt their work until a constitution had been drawn up and ratified.

The Storming of the Bastille

On July 9th the National Assembly proclaimed itself a Constituent Assembly, thus underlining its duty to introduce a new social order and draw up its constitutional foundation. The King, against his better judgement, was obliged to accept this resolution of the National Assembly, with which in reality he had no wish to reconcile himself. Troops loyal to the King started rallying in Versailles and Paris, while the people and the deputies followed with alarm the actions of the King and his supporters, interpreting them rightly enough as a threat to the National Assembly. When on July 12th it was made public that the King had dismissed Necker, reputed to be the only champion of reform in the government, and the people also learnt that troops were being concentrated in Paris they saw in this news proof of a decision of the counter-revolutionary forces to embark on an offensive.

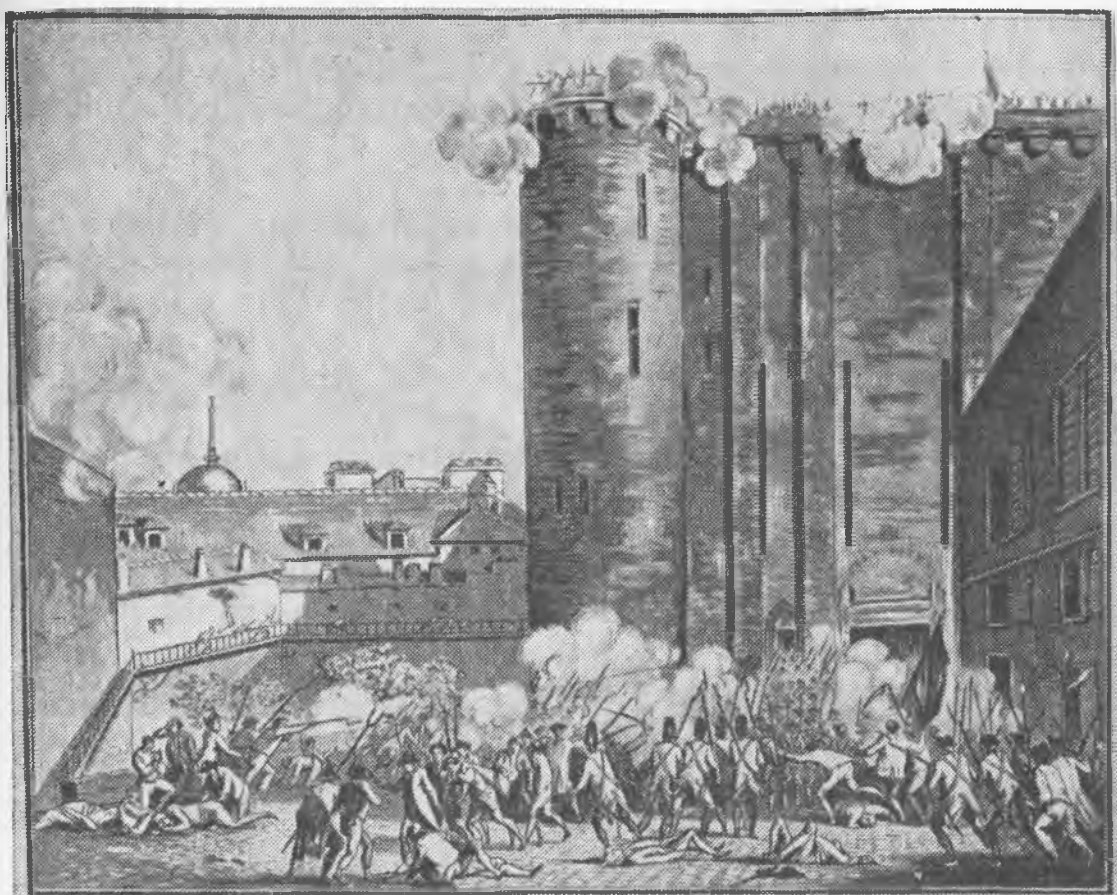
The streets and squares of the city were soon seething with people. Skirmishes with the King's troops broke out in various places and the shots that rang out served to fan popular indignation. The people of Paris spontaneously rose to battle.

Early on the morning of July 13th the alarm was sounded and the Paris poor came out into the streets armed with axes, pistols and cobble-stones. The advance of the insurgents led the troops to abandon one district after another and the insurgent army grew from hour to hour. The people soon captured the arms shops and military arsenals and seized tens of thousands of guns.

By the morning of July 14th most of the capital was already in the hands of the insurgents but the eight towers of the fortified Bastille prison still loomed imperturbable over the city. The revolutionary ardour which had seized hold of the people led them on to storm this formidable fortress. To capture the Bastille with its moats, drawbridges, large garrison and cannon seemed an impossible task. Yet for the people in revolt there was nothing impossible. The artillerymen who came over to their side opened fire and broke the chains of one of the drawbridges. The people marched bravely forward and soon broke their way in. The commander of the garrison was killed and his men surrendered. The Bastille had fallen.

The capture of the Bastille on July 14th was a great triumph of the people in revolt. This momentous date marked the beginning of the French Revolution. From that day onwards the decisive revolutionary force, the people, entered battle with their former masters, and it was their role in the ensuing months that made victory possible.

The King was obliged to step down in face of this great wave of popular fury and on July 17th together with Constituent As-



The storming of the Bastille. Etching

sembly members he came to Paris to give formal recognition to this revolutionary triumph. Events in Paris were followed by revolutionary outbreaks in cities throughout France. All over the country, government officials were deprived of their former offices and new city councils were elected. A revolutionary army came into being—the National Guard.

The peasantry took up arms as well. After hearing of the storming of the Bastille they broke their way into the residences of their hated masters and destroyed them. In some areas the peasants seized their masters' fields and woods and divided them up among themselves. There were frequent cases of refusal to pay taxes and perform the customary labour services. Peasant uprisings and violence in protest against the exploitation and oppression to which their noble masters subjected them were to spread over the length and breadth of France.

The Declaration of the Rights of Man

The initial victories of the revolution were so remarkable and the first decisive blows against the absolute monarchy were dealt out so effectively because the whole of the third estate—that is

both the people and the bourgeoisie that led it—at this stage were united and pursuing common aims. The bourgeoisie was a young and progressive element intent on combating feudal absolutism. It did not yet fear the people and marched forward with it shoulder to shoulder.

This unity and the tremendous wave of revolutionary fervour that gripped the whole nation was reflected in “The Declaration of the Rights of Man” (*de l’homme et du citoyen*) which was adopted by the Constituent Assembly on August 26, 1789. This momentous document was to lay down the fundamental principles of the new social order ushered in by the Revolution.

The Declaration consisted of 17 articles, the first of which proclaimed: “Men are born free and entitled to equal rights and remain so throughout their lives.” In an era when in the majority of countries throughout the world feudal absolutism was still the order of the day and all those who did not belong to the nobility or the Church were deprived of any rights whatsoever, when serfdom and slavery were common practices, this proclamation of freedom and equal rights was stunningly revolutionary.

The Declaration of the Rights also proclaimed such hallowed and inalienable rights of the individual citizen as personal freedom, freedom of speech and conscience, inviolability of person and the need to resist all forms of oppression. The right to private property was also proclaimed as another of these hallowed and inalienable rights, which showed not merely that bourgeois and peasant property were being protected from infringements on the part of landowners (in this lay its progressive aspect) but also testified to an attempt to perpetuate the right for all time. This pointed to the bourgeois limitations of the Declaration, since it meant that the freedom it proclaimed was of a purely formal variety, as it perpetuated inequality based on property.

Nevertheless, taken all in all the Declaration of the Rights represented a document of tremendous revolutionary significance. The famous slogan “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity” taken from its pages was to resound throughout the world sounding the knell of feudal reaction and absolutism.

The Wealthy Bourgeois Come to Power

However, the fruits of victory were not to be enjoyed by the whole of the third estate or even the whole of the bourgeoisie. Power was soon virtually in the hands of the big bourgeoisie or the “bourgeois aristocracy” as it came to be called. In the Constituent Assembly, in the Paris and provincial city councils and the National Guard the decisive voice was soon to become that

of the richest and economically most powerful section of the bourgeoisie.

Count Honoré de Mirabeau, a gifted parliamentary orator, was a political leader who was prepared to go to any lengths to accomplish his ends: in his speeches he subjected the absolutist state to withering criticism and in the early days was one of the most authoritative political leaders in the Constituent Assembly, although later he engaged in secret dealings with the court. It was the Marquis de La Fayette, a rich noble who had made a name for himself during the American War of Independence, who took command of the National Guard, which consisted in the main of bourgeois elements. All those who wished to join it had to come complete with an expensive dress uniform quite beyond the means of the poor.

In order to consolidate the power of the big bourgeoisie at the end of 1789 representatives of this social group in the Constituent Assembly introduced laws stipulating a system of electoral qualifications which served to divide the country's citizens into two groups with different rights. Those citizens (only male, of course) who had the right to vote and be elected were referred to as "active citizens", who possessed the required property qualifications and who were obliged to pay direct taxes on a differential scale. Those citizens who did not possess the required property qualifications were not able to vote or be elected and were referred to as "passive citizens". Of the total population of 26 million, only about 4,300,000 or a sixth part acquired political rights. One of the political journalists who was to win fame in the course of the revolution, Jean-Paul Marat, wrote in his newspaper *Friend of the People* that these laws created a new aristocracy, an aristocracy based on wealth.

The big bourgeoisie set itself apart from the rest of the third estate and was soon to give its actual power legal formulation.

It should be noted meanwhile that despite the sway of the big bourgeoisie interested purely in transforming France along bourgeois lines, the Constituent Assembly adopted a number of laws of major progressive significance. For example in 1789-1790 France's administrative apparatus was restructured: the mediaeval administrative units—provinces, generalities, ballages, etc.—were replaced by 83 departments of more or less equal size. The Constituent Assembly did away with the former class divisions into three estates and abolished all aristocratic titles. In a decree of November 2, 1789, the Constituent Assembly ordered that all Church property and lands should be put at the disposal of the nation. The confiscated Church lands which were to be referred to as "national property" were put up for sale. The Church was also deprived of various of its former functions (for



Jean-Paul Marat. Engraving

example, registration of births, marriages and deaths) which were entrusted to the state. Various other laws were also introduced which did away with all those restrictions which had been obstructing commercial and industrial initiative.

The bourgeois laws introduced by the Constituent Assembly were in keeping with the interests of all those classes which made up the former third estate, including of course the bourgeoisie

which had been the driving force behind them. For this section of society, however, the introduction of these laws represented the completion of the tasks to be carried out by the bourgeois revolution. After coming to power and putting through all those revolutionary changes necessary to promote its own particular interests the big bourgeoisie was soon to degenerate into a conservative force opposed to any further revolutionary advance.

Meanwhile the common people and the democratic sections of the bourgeoisie saw in these measures merely a beginning. The further progress of the revolution was of direct concern to them. The peasantry, which constituted the vast majority of the population, demanded that all feudal practices and labour services be abolished and that they be given land. In the week of August 4th-11th, 1789, the Constituent Assembly abolished serfdom, but this was more a reform on paper than in practice since in actual fact only a few of the aspects of serfdom concerning the peasants' personal liberty were affected; the central problem, that of the agrarian system as a whole, still remained unsolved.

In 1790 there was a new wave of peasant unrest after the peasants refused to pay the former requisitions and taxes to their masters: in a number of departments open rebellion was even reported.

The urban poor were also far from content, since they were still deprived of any rights and were now faced by still more desperate poverty than before. A large part of the nobility had emigrated and orders for luxury goods had almost ceased coming, thus bringing about a serious lull in local commerce. In addition there were serious food shortages in Paris and other towns.

On October 5th-6th, 1789, the poor people of Paris, and especially working women and the wives of craftsmen and petty traders, set out on a march to Versailles in protest at the bread shortage and its exorbitant price. They surrounded the palace and even forced their way into the apartments of Queen Marie Antoinette. Twice Louis XVI went out onto the balcony to calm the crowd. At the people's demand the King and later the Constituent Assembly moved from Versailles to Paris.

Alarmed by the people's action, on October 21, 1789, the Constituent Assembly adopted a law allowing for the use of armed force to counter popular demonstrations. Later, on June 14, 1791, Le Chapelier's law was passed prohibiting the forming of workers' unions and strikes. Despite these harsh measures and repressions the big bourgeoisie which now had the upper hand in the Constituent Assembly was unable to check the mounting tide of popular discontent.

Two defenders of the people's interests Maximilien Robespierre (1758-1794), a deputy to the Assembly, and Jean-Paul Marat,

editor of the newspaper *Friend of the People*, boldly exposed the self-interested anti-democratic nature of the policy pursued by the party of the big bourgeoisie in the Assembly and pointed out the consequences, which would prove fatal to the revolution.

The fears of these bold revolutionaries were not without foundation. The counter-revolutionary group which maintained secret links with the court had by no means resigned itself to defeat. Marie Antoinette kept up a secret correspondence via émigrés with various European monarchs, urging them to embark on an armed intervention against France.

The Varennes Crisis

In June 1791 the King and Queen attempted to flee abroad and join the enemies of the revolution. Having disguised themselves in simple servants' attire they succeeded in escaping from Paris. However not far from the border in the small town of Varennes they were recognised and their carriage was halted and then brought back to Paris with a popular escort.

The King's treacherous flight to join the enemies of the revolution had an electrifying effect on the minds of the people. Hitherto the majority of Frenchmen, while deeply devoted to the revolutionary cause, also believed in the King's good intentions; the simple folk assumed the King was a good man and that it was his ministers who were to blame for everything. After the incident at Varennes more and more people began to support the idea of a republic.

Meanwhile the conservative majority in the Constituent Assembly proceeded to defend the King. While in possession of incontestable proof of his treachery, the Assembly put out a falsified version of the incident to the effect that he had been kidnapped, and restored to Louis his former powers. This caused violent indignation among democratic circles in Paris. In a number of political clubs (which at that period provided the nearest existing equivalent to the modern party) serious agitation for a republic began.

On July 17th a large peaceful demonstration against the monarchy took place on the Champ-de-Mars. The Assembly gave orders for detachments of the National Guard under the command of La Fayette to be sent to the scene and disperse the crowd. They opened fire and a large number of people were killed and wounded. This massacre was the signal for an open split in the ranks of the third estate. The big bourgeoisie started to defend itself by force of arms against the people. Conservative elements in the Assembly were now engaging in open counter-revolutionary action.

On the eve of the massacre on the Champ-de-Mars there occurred a split in the most influential political club, that of the Jacobins. The Right wing grouped around La Fayette and other leaders of the big bourgeoisie walked out of the club and set up a new exclusive one with prohibitive subscriptions—that of the Feuillants.

The leadership of the Jacobins then passed into the hands of those in favour of carrying the revolution to its logical conclusion, headed by Robespierre and Brissot.

On September 13th, the King signed a constitution drafted by the Assembly which provided for a constitutional monarchy and instituted anti-democratic electoral qualifications. On September 30th the Constituent Assembly was disbanded.

The Overthrow of the Monarchy

On October 1, 1791, a new Legislative Assembly came into office. It had been elected exclusively by "active citizens", i.e., well-to-do people. In this Assembly it was the Feuillants who held sway, although this state of affairs did not correspond in the least to the prevailing mood in the country.

On April 20, 1792, France declared war on Austria. This war had long been prepared for by the monarchs of Europe, who planned to quell the revolution in France by force. Louis XVI and a group of his courtiers had also been working towards this end, in the hope that foreign intervention would bolster the tottering French monarchy. For this very reason Robespierre, Marat and their supporters protested against involving France in this war, pointing out that it was vital to crush counter-revolution at home before turning to deal with counter-revolution elsewhere.

Brissot and his supporters on the other hand—who were referred to first as Brissotins and then as Girondins—were in favour of an immediate declaration of war. This led to a clash between Robespierre's supporters and the Girondins which was to become increasingly acute.

In March 1792 the King instructed the Girondins to take over the ministries. After taking upon themselves this role of an officially accepted government the Girondins made use of their new power to bring war nearer, hoping for speedy and easy victories. But as Robespierre and Marat had foreseen, the war began with a French defeat. The King dismissed the Girondin ministers and once again the Feuillants were in charge.

Those in command of the army—La Fayette and other generals—were strongly opposed to the idea of any victories by the revolutionary army. Queen Marie Antoinette contrived to send

secret dispatches to Vienna with information regarding the plans of the French army. This enabled the armies of Austria and Prussia (who by this time had also joined the war) to achieve ubiquitous success at very little cost to themselves, chasing out the retreating and demoralised French troops.

At this crucial hour the people arose to defend their revolutionary homeland. Since war was already a *fait accompli*, it was vital to conduct it in a revolutionary way, declared Robespierre, Marat and Danton (1759-1794) who by this time had gained considerable influence among his countrymen. The Jacobins now provided the main organisational force of the popular movement. They justly pointed out that it was impossible to make any headway at the front without securing the situation in the rear and ruling out the risk of treachery at home.

Thousands of volunteers joined the battalions set up to reinforce the army. On June 11th, under popular pressure the Legislative Assembly adopted a decree declaring a state of emergency in the country. All able-bodied men were to be enlisted. This decree met with whole-hearted approval, since the people was eager to bar the way to the interventionists. It was at this period that the battle-hymn, the *Marseillaise*, came into being and soon won wide popularity: with this song on their lips the volunteer battalions hurried forward to meet the enemy.

Against this background of popular revolutionary fervour the incapacity of the Legislative Assembly and the government to channel this popular enthusiasm and suppress treachery became clearer still. The source of all the conspiracies and criminal intrigue was the court and the revolutionary instinct of the masses led them to this hive of treachery. From July onwards the demand for the overthrow of Louis XVI was to resound louder and louder both in Paris and the provinces. On the night of August 9th, once again the bells rang out over Paris, interspersed with cannon salvos. Early the next morning armed detachments marched on the Tuileries. The Swiss guard opened fire and a short but desperate fight ensued, after which the people forced their way into the palace.

The popular uprising of August 10th, 1792, marked the downfall of the French monarchy which had a history of over a thousand years. Louis XVI was overthrown and imprisoned in the Temple and his ministers were dismissed. A new government—the Provisional Executive Council—was set up, which consisted mainly of Girondins. The distinction between “active” and “passive” citizens was abolished and new elections for a National Convention were announced in which all adult males had the right to vote.

The Struggle Between the Jacobins and the Girondins

The popular uprising of August 10th, 1792, ushered in a new, more advanced stage of the revolution. However, the immediate consequence of the uprising was the transfer of power to the Girondins. Both in the government and the Legislative Assembly the Feuillants were obliged to stand down and make room for the Girondins, who took over the leadership.

The Girondins and their leaders Brissot, Roland, Vergniaud and others represented first and foremost the commercial, industrial and landowning bourgeoisie from the provinces. At the outset this group put up bold opposition to the defenders of feudal absolutism. Yet once they came to power as a result of the successful popular uprising in which they had actually taken no part, they took the view that the principal tasks of the revolution had already been implemented and they soon came to represent a conservative force.

Meanwhile the Jacobins or Montagnards did not as yet represent a united body. The Jacobins were a bloc made up of the democratic (middle and petty) bourgeoisie, the peasantry and the urban poor, or in other words almost all those sections of the population whose main demands had not yet been satisfied. While the various classes and class groups which made up this bloc did not all have the same objectives they were united by a firm resolve to defend the revolution and further its advance until all their demands had been finally satisfied.

The Girondins on the other hand sought to check the revolutionary tide, quite content with the results that had already been achieved. Such was the profound divergence of aims between them and the Jacobins.

The opening session of the Convention was held on September 21, 1792, in the midst of triumphant jubilation after the Prussian defeat and withdrawal the day before at the battle of Valmy—the first victory of the revolutionary France over the counter-revolutionary coalition of European powers. The deputies to the Convention were inspired by this first victory and amidst loud cheers a decree abolishing the monarchy was adopted and September 21st was proclaimed the first day of the “republican era”—the Year IV of Freedom, the Year I of the Republic. The founding of the republic was greeted enthusiastically throughout the country in the jubilant mood that followed the victory at Valmy.

However, soon after the days of exultation the political scene was once again dominated by the struggle between the Girondins and the Jacobins. The question of the King's fate had to be decided, and while the Jacobins demanded his execution the

Girondins pressed for a milder alternative, understanding full well that the King's execution would pave the way for a further advance of the revolution. The King was brought before the Convention for trial, and the trial which was to last until January 1793 soon became nothing more than an arena for the struggle between the Girondins and the Jacobins. Despite all the efforts of the Girondins to save the King, he was found guilty of treason and sentenced to death. On January 21, 1793 Louis XVI was sent to the guillotine.

Meanwhile the war dragged on involving more and more European nations. In 1793 England, Spain and Holland and a number of German and Italian states joined the counter-revolutionary coalition. The Russian Empire under Catherine II also supported the anti-French coalition, and revolutionary France thus found herself up against practically the whole of Europe.

After the victory at Valmy, the French troops embarked on a counter-offensive. The interventionists were soon driven out of French territory and this feat was followed by a French advance into Belgium. In March 1793 General Dumouriez conspired with the Girondins, betrayed France and went over to the enemy camp. After this the French troops started to retreat and by the late spring of that year the position showed a marked deterioration. Once again the interventionists invaded France.

The Uprising of May 31-June 2, 1793

The long desperate war involving vast material damage and loss of life, France's complete isolation and the disruption of the country's economy all gave rise to an acute food shortage. Food prices soared and there was a desperate bread shortage in the towns, which struck hardest at the urban and rural poor. Hunger and the mounting tide of poverty led them to demand decisive measures: the introduction of "the maximum" (government limitation of prices) and a clamping down on speculation. The interests of the urban poor were voiced by popular agitators such as Jacques Roux, Varlet, referred to as "sans-culottes" by the Girondins.

In the villages, the peasantry which had still not been freed from all kinds of feudal duties and taxes also came out in open protest against its grievances.

The Girondins held themselves aloof from the people's plight. Cut off from the people and isolated within their own narrow clique, their energies were concentrated exclusively on their struggle with the Jacobins and they did not pay sufficient attention to the people's suffering or the situation at the front.

The Jacobins hand in hand with the "sans-culottes" organised



Maximilien Robespierre. Portrait

an armed revolt against the Girondins. From May 31 to June 2, 1793, Paris was once more in the grip of a popular uprising. The mob succeeded in driving 29 Girondin deputies out of the Convention and in depriving them of the leading government posts. Power was at last in the hands of the Jacobins.

The Revolutionary Democratic Dictatorship of the Jacobins

The Jacobins came to power at a critical stage of the revolution. The exhausted, poorly equipped French forces were being hard pressed by five foreign powers. A counter-revolutionary royalist revolt which had originally broken out in Vendée was gaining ground rapidly in the west of the country. In the south and the south-west the Girondins after escaping from house-arrest started

to organise a counter-revolutionary uprising. One by one the departments where the Girondins held sway took up arms against Paris. By the middle of June, 60 of the 83 departments were in the throes of revolt. The Convention managed to retain control over a starving Paris and the immediately surrounding territory encircled by enemy armies which were gradually closing in on the city. It seemed as if the collapse of the Republic was at hand.

Yet in this hour of fatal danger the Jacobins were to display indefatigable energy and courage that allowed of no compromise or defeat. In his notes written during the uprising of May 31-June 2, 1793, Robespierre outlined the tasks of the revolution in the following words: "United will is required.... The danger from within comes from the bourgeoisie; in order to defeat the bourgeoisie the people must be united.... The people and the Convention must act as one, the Convention must join forces with the people...."

The Solution of the Agrarian Problem

Within an extremely short space of time the Jacobins were to solve the most important among the outstanding problems of the revolution. The main demands of the peasants were satisfied by the laws of June 3 and July 10 and 17. The lands of those nobles who had emigrated were confiscated, divided up into small plots and sold on the basis of a ten-year credit. Communal lands were divided up among the peasants with equal portions of land for each citizen. All feudal practices were abolished once and for all, and the peasants were henceforth freed from the obligation to perform labour services for the nobles. The Jacobins accomplished in the course of two weeks what other revolutionary governments had failed to accomplish in the course of four years.

This bold revolutionary act of meeting the basic demands of the peasantry—which amounted to a complete abolition of feudal patterns in agriculture—won the Jacobin Convention the support of the peasantry which made up the bulk of the population. While formerly they had hesitated as to whether to support the Girondins or the Jacobins now the peasantry en masse sided with the Jacobin republic. The peasants enlisted in the republican army now saw themselves as defenders not merely of revolutionary ideas but their own interests as well.

The Constitution of 1793

Within three weeks the Jacobins had drafted and ratified a new constitution. The constitution of 1793 was the most democratic France had ever known. Each of its articles was permeated with unshakable faith in the people's victory.

However after adopting this extremely democratic constitution the Convention was not yet in a position to set about implementing it. The tense situation at the front where the final outcome of the war was now being decided, the mounting tide of civil war which divided the country into two irreconcilable camps, the wave of murders, assassinations and conspiracy—all called for quite different methods of government from those that had been employed hitherto.

In this connection the Jacobins and their leaders had no clear-cut theories and plans. They had not even foreseen that such a situation might arise, but the very course of events obliged them to adopt a new path.

Establishment of the Revolutionary Democratic Dictatorship. The Reign of Terror

On July 13th, Marat was murdered. He was stabbed by a young girl Charlotte Corday, who gained entry into his house disguised as a petitioner after being prompted to perform this heinous crime by the Girondins. This fearless friend of the people who had always upheld the revolutionary cause and been a champion of the poor was extremely popular among the people and his death was a shattering blow to all Parisians. Three days later a local Jacobin leader in Lyons by the name of Chalier was also murdered. The Girondin counter-revolutionaries had clearly taken up terrorist tactics.

The Jacobins were obliged to answer this wave of counter-revolutionary terror with revolutionary terror. Some time earlier the Committee for Public Safety which had been set up by the Convention in April 1793 had been empowered to arrest suspect persons, and the revolutionary tribunal now enhanced its powers. The former Queen, Marie Antoinette, was handed over to the tribunal's judges for trial and sentenced to the guillotine. The property of enemies of the Republic was made liable to confiscation.

On September 4th-5th, 1793, the Paris poor demanded of the Convention that they intensify the terror against counter-revolutionary elements and that fixed prices (maximum) for food be introduced. The Jacobins heeded the voice of the people and the terror was duly intensified. Fixed prices for almost all types of food were introduced and also a maximum wage for workers. The latter decision testified to the ambivalence of Jacobin policy.

On August 23rd, the Convention adopted a decree which virtually enlisted the whole nation. Mass recruitment was carried

out within a very short space of time and soon a million-strong army was mustered. This enormous army now had to be equipped with arms and ammunition. Both the army and the starving towns in the rear had to be fed; counter-revolutionary revolts had to be quelled and conspiracies forestalled. Finally, there remained the titanic task of beating back and then defeating once and for all the vast armies of the counter-revolutionary coalition.

In order to accomplish these formidable objectives a strong centralised revolutionary government was required. But this in itself was not enough—such a government had to command unfailing popular support, express the people's will and make timely use of popular initiative and the creative revolutionary activity of the masses.

The actual course of events indicated to the Jacobins those methods which were necessary to carry out these tasks. These involved temporary abandonment of a broadly democratic constitutional government and the elaboration of fitting forms of a revolutionary democratic dictatorship in keeping with the given situation.

The Revolutionary Government

The very logic of the revolutionary struggle dictated that the Convention should become the supreme legislative and executive organ thus combining both functions in one and the same body. The commissaires of the Convention who were sent to the provinces and to work in the army were granted wide powers. The revolutionary government was embodied in the Committee for Public Safety. It was this Committee which directly supervised all aspects of the Republic's state administration, ranging from questions of defence to practical decisions connected with food supplies and military equipment. The Committee for Public Safety was headed by the fearless revolutionary and outstanding statesman Maximilien Robespierre, known among the people as "the Incorruptible", the ardent young champion of the people Saint-Just (only 22 when the revolution broke out) and the astute politician Georges Couthon. Questions of defence were made the province of the mathematician and capable organiser Lazare Carnot. All state organs were responsible to the Committee for Public Safety and its commands had to be carried out without question.

The Revolutionary Committees and the Jacobin Club

The revolutionary government's main source of strength lay not so much in the firm centralised power as in the solid support it was accorded by the people. All the main organs of the Jacobin dictatorship from the Convention down maintained constant contact with the people. The Committee for Public Safety and the Convention were also supported by numerous local revolutionary committees which had been set up all over the country. These consisted of 12 members elected from among the most politically aware citizens of each rural commune or urban district. These committees made possible wide participation of the masses in the state structure and the formulation of revolutionary policies. The Jacobin Club with its hundreds of branches scattered throughout the country also played a major role in the political life of the Republic. Political measures, both those under discussion or those about to be implemented by the Convention and other state organs were subjected to preliminary discussion at club meetings in the provinces. At these meetings all members were equal: there were no ministers, commissaires or generals.

The Turning Point in the War

Indefatigable efforts on the part of the people led by the Jacobin government reaped their first fruit in the winter of 1793. By this time the counter-revolutionary unrest within the country had been finally put down. The coalition armies were now faced by 14 Republican armies which by the autumn had halted the enemy's advance. Soon afterwards there followed a rapid series of French victories and the Republican armies were able to launch a major counter-offensive. New commanders of humble origin were to prove outstanding commanders. Former sergeant Lazare Gauche, entrusted with a whole army at the age of 25, inspired his men with tremendous will to victory. By the spring of 1794 the soldiers of the Republic had driven the interventionists beyond the borders of France and the theatre of war was transferred to enemy territory.

The Crisis of the Jacobin Dictatorship

In an extremely short period the Jacobin dictatorship succeeded in attaining the revolution's main objectives: feudal social patterns had been abolished; counter-revolution at home was crushed and the armies of intervention had been beaten back beyond the

Republic's borders. This the Jacobins were able to accomplish because the people stood united behind them and because in their policies they furthered the interests of the urban poor and the popular masses.

While there still existed a real threat of a restoration of the pre-revolutionary order at the hands of the foreign interventionists, the bourgeoisie and propertied strata of the rural and urban population were all prepared to accept the strict restrictions of the Jacobin dictatorship, the fixed prices, the penalties for speculation and requisitions.

However, once the danger had passed and the Jacobin armies had finally defeated the enemy at the battle of Fleurus on June 26, 1794, the bourgeoisie started to seek ways and means of avoiding the heavy hand of Jacobin rule. Soon the prosperous and even the middle peasantry followed suit and moved further to the right. The revolution had liberated the peasants from feudal oppression and given them land but the restrictions imposed by the Jacobin regime rendered it impossible for the propertied strata of the countryside to make the most of their newly-gained advantages. This gave rise to opposition to the Jacobin dictatorship which but yesterday had been accorded undivided support.

Meanwhile the Jacobin government was also no longer sure of the firm support of the poorest section of society—the rural and urban poor. Its policy vis-à-vis these groups was of a contradictory character. While fixed food prices were very much in their interests, fixed limits for wages, labour requisitions and various other measures gave rise to a certain amount of antagonism.

Without being fully aware of the course they were following, the Jacobins were defending the interests of the bourgeoisie. Historical conditions at that time were not yet ripe for the transition to any other, superior social structure. This meant that all efforts on the part of Jacobin leaders such as Robespierre and Saint-Just to achieve a society that would bring men happiness and justice were doomed to failure; it was the bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie alone who would enjoy the fruits of their heroic struggle.

Struggle Within the Jacobin Ranks

All these factors paved the way for a crisis in the Jacobin dictatorship.

This crisis was reflected first of all in a split in the ranks of the Jacobin party itself. First of all the Jacobins all joined forces to do away with the "sans-culottes". Then serious controversy arose in their own ranks. The revolutionary government led by Robes-

pierre was attacked from the right by Danton and his supporters and from the left by the journalist Hébert who had a large following in the Paris commune and the club of the Cordeliers.

The revolutionary government under Robespierre was to make short work of both these groups. In March the revolutionary tribunal sentenced the Hébertists to the guillotine and in April the same fate awaited Danton and his followers. For a time it looked as if all the enemies of the Jacobins had been destroyed.

The Counter-Revolutionary Coup of 9 Thermidor

But no more than two or three months were to elapse before another movement against the revolutionary government raised its head within the Jacobin party. This time, however, it was not a question of any open opposition but a conspiracy which was kept a well-guarded secret. In this conspiracy the remaining Dantonists, Hébertists and other antagonists of Robespierre's took part. The conspirators succeeded in winning the support of the "marais" in the Convention and they also had their men in the Committee for Public Safety.

On 9 Thermidor (July 27th) 1794 the conspirators managed to interrupt the speeches delivered by Saint-Just and Robespierre and announce their arrest, which was then duly ratified. "The Republic has perished, the rule of the robbers is at hand," were Robespierre's last words.

Meanwhile the people of Paris rose to defend the Jacobin leaders, realising full well that in defending Robespierre and his friends they were defending the revolution. Robespierre, Saint-Just and Couthon were released from prison and taken to the Hôtel de Ville.

But by this time it was too late. The conspirators in the name of the Convention rallied to their aid all bourgeois counter-revolutionary elements and sent troops out against the Commune. At three o'clock in the morning one of the columns of counter-revolutionary troops succeeded in breaking its way into the Hôtel de Ville. On the next morning, 10 Thermidor, Robespierre, Saint-Just, Couthon and their closest followers were guillotined without trial on Place de Grèves.

This counter-revolutionary coup marked the end of the Jacobin dictatorship. After the death of Robespierre bourgeois reaction was to triumph.

Chapter Six

EUROPE DURING THE NAPOLEONIC WARS

The Beginning of the Counter-Revolution in France

The overthrow of the revolutionary government on 9 Thermidor 1794 marked the beginning of the bourgeois counter-revolution. Although in the first few days after Robespierre's execution the deputies at the Convention continued to profess their allegiance to the revolutionary cause, this mask was soon abandoned and the victors showed themselves in their true colours.

The streets were now controlled by roaming bands of "Jeunesse Dorée" (Golden Youth). In the Convention and the government organs it was the so-called "Right Thermidorians" who held sway—representatives of a new section of the bourgeoisie which had grown up during the revolution, flourishing on speculation. At their insistence fixed prices were abandoned and complete freedom was restored to the sphere of commerce. All food prices immediately soared and speculation reached unprecedented proportions. The town poor went hungry while the traders and speculators made tremendous profits.

In November 1794 the Golden Youth destroyed the Jacobin Club and this outrage marked the beginning of a wave of counter-revolutionary terror, as Girondins and Feuillants and other counter-revolutionary groups settled their accounts with the Jacobins.

The major social and democratic achievements of the Jacobin dictatorship were done away with. In 1795 a new constitution was drafted which abolished universal suffrage and restored electoral qualifications based on property.

The Directory

At the end of 1795 in accordance with the new constitution power was transferred to the Directory (an executive of five "directors") and two legislative chambers—the Council of the

Ancients and the Council of the Five Hundred. Both in the Directory and the two chambers it was the new rapacious, speculative bourgeoisie that held sway. This ruling group was full of contempt for the urban poor, which it feared greatly, and it was this fear that lay at the root of the anti-popular reactionary policy it pursued. However, this new bourgeoisie which had seized the riches of the former landowning nobles could not permit the restoration of the old regime. It was an anti-monarchist government and it ruthlessly crushed all attempts on the part of the royalists to recapture power. This meant that the Directory lacked any semblance of a co-ordinated policy, since it was continually trying to strike a compromise between the two extremes of left and right. This vacillating "policy" became known as the political see-saw (*bascule*).

In 1796 the Directory brought to light a carefully planned conspiracy, known as the "conspiracy of equals" led by Gracchus Babeuf (1760-1797). Babeuf was the first communist revolutionary, who hoped to do away with private property by means of a dictatorship of the minority. But the communism he propagated was of a primitive egalitarian variety and Babeuf failed to appreciate the historic role of the proletariat. Babeuf was executed and the conspiracy fizzled out.

After crushing this conspiracy the Directory soon found itself threatened from the right. In 1797 there was a threat of a monarchist coup and once more the Directory had to resort to force to defend itself. After these constant swings of the political see-saw to right and left, the Directory soon lost most of its former authority and the people's confidence and was hard put to it to cling to the last vestiges of its power.

The 18th Brumaire Coup d'État

On the morning of 18 Brumaire in the year VIII (November 9, 1799) on the pretext that there existed a threat of a new Jacobin conspiracy, the Council of the Ancients appointed Napoleon commander of the armed forces. In a voice throbbing with emotion Napoleon made a vow that in this situation, when great danger threatened the Republic and a terrible conspiracy had been brought to light, he, Bonaparte, would defend "the Republic founded on liberty, equality and the sacred principles of popular representation". Such was the opening of a carefully premeditated and prepared political coup. By the evening of the next day the coup had been completed. In a highly "legal" fashion the Directory and all its organs had been swept away and a new order, that of the Consulate, had been established.

However, although in his short and somewhat incoherent speeches throughout Brumaire (November) General Bonaparte assured everyone that he was resolved to defend the "sacred principles of popular representation", the real motive behind the latest coup was to do away with these sacred principles and set up his own unlimited dictatorship.

The Consulate

On the surface little had changed since the time of the Directory. Bonaparte instructed his counsellors to write "in brief obscure terms". The new constitution adopted after the coup d'état of Brumaire, known as the constitution of the year VIII, was drawn up according to Napoleon's instructions. It was brief in the extreme and worded in very obscure terms. France was to remain a republic as before. The revolutionary calendar which had been introduced by the Convention was retained, as were the revolutionary slogan "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity", and the symbolic figures of Liberty and the Republic. Executive power, however, passed from the Directory to three consuls, and the two legislative chambers were replaced by four organs—the Senate, the State Council, the Tribune and the Legislative Body. Deputies to each of these legislative organs were not elected but appointed by the government from among proposed candidates. These four institutions achieved very little since their spheres of action overlapped considerably and their power was more apparent than real.

Real power in the republic was now in the hands of a single man—the First Consul General Bonaparte (1769-1821). When he carried out his coup d'état in 1799 his reputation was not yet established and he had no grounds for aspiring to leadership in the country. He was of course known to be one of the finest generals, but at that period there were a number of fine generals, such as Moreau, Jourdan and Masséna and rumours also circulated to the effect that Bonaparte had abandoned the Egyptian army in a quite hopeless situation without any official authorisation.

Bonaparte was well aware of all this and accordingly tended at first to give prominence in his speeches to the republic and the "sacred principles" of the revolution, keeping his own role in the background. Meanwhile he was going out of his way quietly and inconspicuously to do away with the republic and those very principles of which he spoke so much. He abolished the parliamentary system and local self-government the revolution had brought and set up in their place a strong centralised administration embracing the whole country. The Ministry of the Interior



Napoleon. Engraving based on a portrait

and the all-powerful police which insinuated its way into all spheres of the nation's life—political, spiritual and private—were to become the most important state organs under the Consulate. The police network was placed in the hands of Joseph Fouché who had been a priest before the revolution, an extremist in the Jacobin Convention, and a Thermidorian under the Directory—cunning, mendacious and treacherous, and a master of intrigue. Fouché was quick to show his new master what he was capable of. The attentats organised against Napoleon Bonaparte by the monarchists in 1800 Fouché—with the direct encouragement of the first consul—declared to be the work of the Jacobins. This provided him with the desired pretext for reprisals against the Jacobins and the Royalists, in short with all those still behaving too independently: the excuse had been found and

the scheme was carried through to its logical conclusion. Freedom of the press was abolished and a few dozen newspapers were closed down. The thirteen newspapers which continued to appear were all turned into government organs.

The Campaign of 1800 and the End of the Second Coalition

Police measures, however, were not enough to consolidate the first consul's power. Bonaparte was aware of this and realised that he needed military triumph and a reputation that spread beyond the confines of his own country. So he proceeded to lead the French army into Northern Italy where the main Austrian forces were deployed. The French army chose the most difficult and unexpected route—across the Alps by way of the high Grand St. Bernard pass. At the beginning of June the army appeared in the enemy's rear. On June 14 after a fierce battle at Marengo the outcome of which was long in the balance, Napoleon succeeded in routing the Austrian army, forcing the survivors to flee in panic.

The outcome of the Austrian campaign was already decided. Another victory at Hohenlinden secured by General Moreau made the Austrians more anxious than ever to sue for peace. By the Treaty of Lunéville signed on February 9, 1801, the terms of which were dictated by the victor, France annexed Belgium and all German territory on the left bank of the Rhine, and Austria agreed to recognise all the so-called "daughter republics", Helvetian (Switzerland), Batavian (Holland), Ligurian (Genoa area) and Cisalpine (Lombardia), which in practice were totally dependent on France, Piedmont being subjected to French occupation.

England from the French Revolution to the Treaty of Amiens

The Treaty of Lunéville made France the leading power in Western Europe. Yet there was still England to be reckoned with, France's traditional enemy, who had long been contending French supremacy in Europe and the colonial world. England had been at war with France for the best part of a decade. During this period her industry, spurred on by the introduction of the latest mechanical innovations, had been making great strides, her fleet had grown considerably and the big bourgeoisie had been making considerable profits from the wars. Taken all in all however, enormous military expenditure had been to the detriment of the country's economy; prices, and in particular the price of bread

had risen steeply. With every passing year the living conditions of the masses were becoming more intolerable. In 1795 riots over food prices broke out in various English towns. Slogans such as "Bread and Peace for the People or Off with the King's Head" were to be found on the walls of the poor districts. In 1797 sailors manning English warships in the English Channel and the North Sea mutinied. In some cases nooses were attached to the masts as a warning to captains and officers. In 1798 a rebellion broke out in Ireland.

The English government was headed at the time by William Pitt the Younger (1759-1806) who, by means of concessions or, more frequently, repression, succeeded in putting down these outbreaks. He pressed for victory over France. However, when Suworov's outstanding victories in Italy on the Adda and in the battle of Trebbia (1799) were followed by a reconciliation between Russia and France, a tremendous setback for England, and when finally Austria also retired from the war, he realised there was no longer any hope of victory over France. The people demanded peace and Pitt resigned. In March 1802 a peace treaty based on mutual concessions was signed between England and France at Amiens. For the first time after ten long years of costly wars resulting in tremendous loss of life France was finally at peace. Some of her enemies she had defeated while the remainder she had obliged to conclude an honourable peace with her. France was now universally recognised as Europe's strongest military power.

Napoleon Becomes Emperor

On the strength of her victories France had gained unprecedented prestige and was now very nearly at the apogée of her glory as Power No. 1 in Europe. Since all her successes were linked with the illustrious name of country's First Consul, Bonaparte decided that the time was ripe for him to realise his true ambitions. He no longer felt obliged to continue his former role of soldier devoted to the Republican cause. In 1802 Bonaparte was made Consul for life and in 1804 he was hailed "Emperor of the French". Napoleon desired to be crowned by the Pope just as Charlemagne had been a thousand years before. The difference in the proceedings lay in the fact that whereas Charlemagne had travelled to the Pope, Napoleon obliged the "holy father" to come to Paris and during the coronation ceremony tore the imperial crown out of the Pope's hands and set it on his head himself.

The Bourgeois Empire

The Republic was gone to be replaced by the Empire. The Tuileries was to become the court of the new Emperor and Napoleon was determined that the splendour and magnificence of his palace should outshine all the other courts of Europe. A new imperial nobility came into being, when former clerks, stable boys and petty traders, devoted heart and soul to Bonaparte, were made dukes, princes and earls overnight. Golden bees on black velvet were to be the emblem of the new empire. Soon a new monarchy had come into being, a powerful monarchy rich and lavish in its outward brilliance, not a feudal monarchy but a bourgeois empire under the one-man dictatorship of Napoleon I.

Bonaparte made short work of the democratic gains of the Revolution. The passing of the Republic was followed by the abolition of many of the recently gained democratic freedoms, and democrats were subjected to ruthless persecution. However, Napoleon's policies were based on clear-cut principles and determined by definite objectives. Bonaparte not only retained the redistribution of property in the interests of the bourgeoisie the Revolution had brought, but went out of his way to consolidate and protect the bourgeois gains. All his policies, all his social and civil legislation promoted the interests of the bourgeoisie and landowning peasants. The interests of dynastic succession obliged the Emperor to make plans for new military successes. The throne of the empire was to be enhanced by a halo of glory. This was called for by the interests of the French bourgeoisie in its aspirations for domination of Western Europe. Meanwhile however, neither England, acknowledged as the leading economic and industrial power in Europe and aspiring to domination of the Western World, nor the old feudal monarchies of Europe were ready to reconcile themselves to the ascendancy of this new, bourgeois Empire. The peace treaties of 1801 and 1802 were regarded as breathing spaces rather than long-standing armistices. In the meantime both sides were busily preparing for war.

The Third Coalition

By the autumn of 1805 Europe was once more embroiled in a large-scale war. On the initiative of English diplomats a powerful new anti-French coalition was set up. It was joined by England, Russia and Austria, and Prussia was ready to attack France too. Events moved rapidly: on October 20th Napoleon forced the Austrian army to capitulate at Ulm and on November 13th French troops marched triumphantly into Vienna. However, shortly before these victories, on October 21st the English navy under Ad-

miral Nelson practically annihilated the Franco-Spanish fleet at Trafalgar. Napoleon was forced to abandon his plans for invading Britain. Trafalgar made up for Ulm and served to restore the balance of power.

On December 2, 1805, the main forces of both sides met in a battle which was to settle the outcome of the war. At the battle of Austerlitz, which came to be known as the "battle of the three Emperors" the Austrian and Russian armies were routed by Napoleon. Tsar Alexander and Emperor Francis of Austria fled from the field in the midst of desperate chaos.

A few days later Austria capitulated. On December 26 she accepted the humiliating terms of the Treaty of Pressburg. As a result the Holy Roman Empire ceased to exist, and Austria was to lose a considerable part of her territory to the expanding French Empire, which thereby gained immeasurable political prestige.

The Fourth Coalition

Bonaparte still had Russia and England to reckon with. In 1806 they were joined by Prussia, Saxony and Sweden in the Fourth Coalition against France.

The presumptuous, self-assured Prussian military, which held this German state, like the army, in the grip of iron discipline and regimentation, carried away by memories of the age of Frederick the Great boastfully promised a lightning victory over the "revolutionary anti-Christ". But no sooner were hostilities under way than events took a very different course.

On October 8, 1806, the French army led by Napoleon set out on a new expedition. Within the space of six days the main body of the Prussian army had been routed in two almost simultaneous battles at Jena and Auerstadt. The Prussians then retreated in panic, abandoning town after town as they went. The last of the Prussian fortresses equipped with massive artillery and a 22,000-strong garrison—Magdeburg—surrendered without resistance to Marshal Ney in command of the French advance forces almost before he had had time to fire a few light mortars, the only heavy weapons he possessed. Within a month of the commencement of the war Prussia was no longer. As the great German poet Heine remarked, "Napoleon only needed to give a whistle and Prussia ceased to exist."

Russia meanwhile continued the struggle. On February 7th-8th, 1807, at Preussisch-Eylau a fierce battle was fought between the French and the Russians. Despite tremendous losses, the outcome of the battle was indecisive. However in the next major battle on June 14th at Friedland Napoleon gained yet another major victory.

The Treaty of Tilsit

Both sides were now eager for a cessation of hostilities. Napoleon and Alexander met at Tilsit and on July 7th, 1807, signed a peace treaty concluding a Franco-Russian alliance. Russia recognised all the conquests and reforms that Napoleon had introduced in Western Europe, while Napoleon for his part promised to give Russian claims in the Middle East his firm support. Russia thus became France's ally against England and joined the Continental System, which amounted to a blockade of the British Isles pressed for by Napoleon in 1806-1807. Napoleon's idea was to force England to her knees by facing her with the alternative of starvation or capitulation. As it turned out, however, these hopes were ill-founded.

In 1809, Napoleon's Empire was to wage war with the Fifth Coalition, again mustered by England. France's main enemy on the continent was still Austria, but within two or three months her armies had been annihilated and in October 1809 in Vienna occupied by the French the Austrian government was obliged to accept an onerous and humiliating peace.

Reasons for the Napoleonic Victories

The year 1809 saw France at the apogée of her glory and power. The French Empire now included Belgium, Holland, northern and central Italy, Illyria and Dalmatia. In northern and central Italy Napoleon set up an Italian kingdom, where his stepson Eugene de Beauharnais ruled as regent for him. The remainder of Western and Central Europe consisted of French vassal states. Napoleon's brother Joseph was installed on the Spanish throne, while his brother-in-law Marshal Murat became King of Naples. Napoleon himself headed the Rheinbund or Confederation of the Rhine which embraced the bulk of the western German states. The Kingdom of Westphalia, comprising various parts of former Prussian territory, was handed to Napoleon's younger brother Jerome. Austria, Prussia and Saxony which had all been defeated by Napoleon now all became his allies. Russia remained on friendly terms with Napoleon, who by 1809 had for all practical purposes achieved complete hegemony over Europe.

What lay at the root of this amazing success and the dazzling victories of the French army and its rapid ascendancy? A great deal is usually made of Napoleon's genius and he is often portrayed as little short of a "Superman". Indeed Bonaparte was a commander and statesman of rare talent, although there was naturally nothing superhuman about him. A young bourgeoisie at the

dawn of its power could always be counted on to produce remarkable champions of its interests. Napoleon not only had a rare capacity for work but he was bold and decisive and possessed an iron will. This short, slight figure of a man, prone to fainting fits in his youth, had a rare gift for asserting his authority over others. When at the age of 27 he was put in command of the Italian campaign and Augereau whom he had outstripped began to object, Bonaparte remarked coldly: "General, you may well be a whole head taller than I, but if you continue to object to my appointment I shall make a point of doing away with that difference." After he became dictator Napoleon's ruthlessness, disdain for those around him and unbridled ambition came clearly to the fore. But being an extremely talented leader of men, Napoleon made a point of surrounding himself with able, gifted helpers. Davout, Ney, Murat, Masséna, Berthier, Lannes and his other marshals were all first-class commanders. If there had been no Napoleon, any one of them might have become the outstanding general of his age. Napoleon also had a number of extremely able supporters working in the civil services.

However it is necessary to probe a lot further than Napoleon's personal qualities and those of his immediate entourage to explain the unprecedented wave of victories that France secured over her enemies. The reason why France won such remarkable triumphs when taking on five enormous European coalitions more or less single-handed in a short space of time and defeating them all can be explained by the fact that bourgeois France represented a more advanced society than the feudal orders of absolutist Europe.

Despite the annexationist, plunderous aims pursued by Napoleon, the wars which he waged against the feudal absolutist states of Europe, for a time at least, represented a distinctly progressive phenomenon. Wherever the French troops went they did away with old feudal practices, replacing them with more progressive bourgeois social patterns. Thus, when Napoleon brought about the collapse of the Holy Roman Empire and wiped off the map of Europe dozens or rather hundreds of tiny, petty German states—the heritage of feudal particularism and disunity—he was making a significant contribution to the advance of the German people.

Deepening Contradictions Within the Napoleonic Empire

The more far-reaching and ambitious Napoleon's plans of conquest grew and the further the borders of the French Empire were extended, the heavier grew the yoke of French rule in the

Empire's satellites and the less progressive elements there were to be observed in Napoleon's policy. Indeed his policy was to change almost beyond recognition as the reactionary annexationist element which had always been present in his plans was now to become the dominant one and before very long the be all and end all of his policy.

France's military, political, commercial and industrial prominence in Europe had laid the foundation for the Napoleonic wars. Napoleon plundered and stripped bare the lands he conquered, enslaving them and bleeding them dry of industrial raw materials, money and other wealth. Napoleon's dominion soon came to constitute a threat to the national integrity of many peoples of Europe. National liberation movements in the subject territories gradually began to grow up, at first weak and clandestine but later of a far bolder nature, and these were to play an important part in bringing about the final downfall of the Empire.

Popular Resistance in Spain

In the course of 1807-1808 French troops occupied Spain and Napoleon's brother Joseph was installed on the Spanish throne. The Spanish people however was in no way prepared to reconcile itself to this state of affairs and rose up against the foreign conquerors. The French put down an uprising in Madrid but were unable to crush the guerilla activities. In July 1808 a 20,000-strong French army under General Dupont was forced to surrender to the guerilla forces at Baylen. On hearing of this disaster Napoleon in a fit of wild anger ordered that Dupont be handed over to a court martial; meanwhile this capitulation was to make a tremendous impact throughout Spain. Napoleon decided to send large forces to Spain. The siege and storming of Saragossa, where the Spaniards defended every street and house to the last man and where 50,000 dead bodies filled the streets after the battle, served to reveal the determination of the Spanish people to perish rather than submit to their would-be conquerors.

The defeat at Saragossa by no means marked the end of the resistance in Spain. The valiant struggle of the Spanish patriots set an inspiring example to other peoples of Europe. In Italy a secret society known as the Carbonari was set up to organise a liberation struggle against the French conquerors. In Prussia, now a humiliated vassal territory of Napoleon, the emergent national-patriotic movement was to take various forms. The well-known German philosopher, Fichte, in his famous "Addresses to the German Nation" incited the people to take up the struggle to liberate their country. In Königsberg officers and students set up a secret

patriotic society known as the Tugendbund or "Union of Virtue". In the Austrian Tyrol the peasants started up a guerilla resistance movement, which the French conquerors were hard put to it to suppress.

1812

Intoxicated by his victories and tremendous power, which meanwhile was becoming more and more illusory, Napoleon chose to disregard these ill omens. By now he was a despotic monarch used to giving orders and no longer capable of appreciating, let alone giving a correct assessment of the national liberation movements against his rule which were developing among the Empire's subject peoples. Such was the situation confronting the Emperor when he embarked on the unnecessary and reckless war against Russia.

Napoleon's Invasion of Russia. The Popular Character of the Resistance Movement

On the night of June 24, 1812, Napoleon's troops treacherously crossed the Niemen, without a declaration of war on Russia.

At the outset of the war France's Grande Armée was numerically superior to the Russian forces and Napoleon advanced rapidly capturing one town after another. Near Smolensk the Russian First Army under Barclay de Tolly and the Second Army under Bagration confronted the invaders together. Napoleon hoped that this battle would be the decisive one of the campaign and that he would succeed in routing his opponent's main force. His plan, however, was thwarted, for the Russian army was not routed: it succeeded in keeping its main strength intact as it retreated from the burning city. Napoleon followed in hot pursuit eager to fight out the decisive battle, destroy the Russian army and bring the war to a swift conclusion.

Russian resistance was to assume an increasingly popular character. This made itself felt above all in the morale of the Russian soldiers, who came to regard the task of driving the foreign conquerors from their lands as their own sacred cause, to which they must devote all their energies. The peoples of the Russian Empire—Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Bashkirs and many others—fought side by side with the Russians in this heroic struggle. The people afforded the army active assistance. The peasants in the occupied territories refused to trade with the enemy and to provide them with vital food supplies. They also handed spies and agents over for trial and abandoned their villages as the enemy approached, burning their huts before taking refuge in the woods and leading away their livestock with them. The peasants also

formed numerous partisan detachments, among the most famous being that led by the peasant Gerasim Kurin near Moscow, which numbered five thousand men, and the one led by Vasilisa Kozhina near Smolensk.

After the Russian armies had joined forces near Smolensk, Alexander I appointed Mikhail Kutuzov, a famous general and pupil of Suворov's, to the post of commander-in-chief of all the armed forces. The Tsar himself had no great liking for Kutuzov but the nation as a whole favoured his appointment and at this critical hour the Tsar was prepared to pay heed to the voice of the nation. The people greeted the news of Kutuzov's appointment with jubilation and it did a great deal to improve the soldiers' morale.

Napoleon advanced rapidly towards Moscow. Kutuzov prepared to give battle near the village of Borodino, not far from Mozhaisk. The right flank of the Russian army under Barclay de Tolly took up its position on the high hill overlooking the river Kolocha and the left flank under Bagration was deployed in a more exposed position on the open plain near the village of Semyonovskaya, where it proceeded to set up its artillery emplacements.

The battle began at dawn on September 7, 1812 (August 26 according to the pre-revolutionary Calendar). A French army of 130,000 faced a Russian army of 120,000. At first Napoleon sent his men to attack the Russian left flank, noting correctly that this was the weak point of the Russian position. The French seized the artillery positions after fierce fighting in the course of which Bagration was fatally wounded. However, the Russian troops stood firm. Napoleon then struck out at the centre of the Russian line and with considerable difficulty eventually succeeded in capturing the mound held by Raevsky's battery. However, the Russian line held firm and there was no break-through. The battle drew to a close as evening fell, by which time the French had lost 58,000 men and 47 of their finest generals.

At first Kutuzov was inclined to renew the attack the next day but since his army had little ammunition left he gave orders for a retreat. He realised that if he kept the army intact the country could fight on, whereas if a continuation of the battle ended in disaster for the Russians the next day, the war was lost. After the military council met in the village of Fili it was decided to surrender Moscow to the enemy without a battle. Later Napoleon was to write of the battle of Borodino: "Of all my battles the most terrible was the one before Moscow. The French showed themselves capable of winning the day, but the Russians commanded the right to be invincible."

At sunrise on September 14th, the first Russian detachments left Moscow. The news that the troops were leaving spread like



The Council at Fili

wild-fire through the city, and events then took an unexpected turn. The whole of the city's population as a man, without receiving any orders to that effect, decided to leave the city rather than remain there under enemy occupation.

Soon after the enemy marched into Moscow fires broke out in various parts of the vast city. The fires spread and the French army was thus deprived of a large part of its vital food supplies and accommodation.

The Russian Counter-Offensive

It was a bitter blow for Kutuzov as for all other Russians to have to abandon Moscow to the enemy. But the prospect of losing the army was still more terrible, since that would have meant losing the war to Napoleon. The army needed to gather its strength after battles which had cost many lives and take on new reinforcements, train them, and work out a new plan of action for driving the enemy out of the country. Under Kutuzov's leadership the Russian army was soon to prove itself quite adequate to this task.

Kutuzov was very astute when it came to foreseeing Napoleon's subsequent plans of action. To outwit him, he took an unexpected route and thus kept his army intact. Napoleon even lost track of the Russian army and for some time did not know where it was.

Following Kutuzov's instructions, partisans helped the army by making surprise sorties against the French, taking prisoners and recapturing much of what had been looted. The battle of Tarutino in October 1812 ended in a Russian victory. Later the battle at Maloyaroslavets was to convince Napoleon of the extent to which the Russian troops had been reinforced.

In the middle of November the Grande Armée by this time exhausted by its many battles and enormous losses approached the river Berezina. In the course of the fierce fighting that went on during the crossing the French lost many more thousands of soldiers.

At the beginning of December, Napoleon secretly abandoned his army to their fate and fled to safety. In a simple carriage, hiding his face behind a thick fur collar to avoid being recognised, he hastened to Paris to start mustering a new army. Such was the inglorious end of his Russian campaign, and his dreams of world domination.

The Patriotic War of 1812 was a just people's war which saved Russia from the treacherous invasion of a foreign conqueror and shattered his ambition to enslave the Russian people.

The Fall of the Napoleonic Empire

Napoleon's defeat in the war of 1812 against Russia marked the beginning of the fall of his Empire. On his return to France, Napoleon mobilised all those capable of bearing arms and set out with a new army to meet the Russian troops which by this time had made their way to Germany. This time Napoleon was confronted not merely by the Russians but by the whole of Europe. Oppressed by French rule, the peoples of Europe rose up to give battle as soon as they heard the news of the rout of the Grande Armée in Russia. France's allies of yesterday—Prussia, Austria, Saxony and others, now joined the new anti-French coalition. The mighty allied armies marched westwards, and at the battle of Leipzig which lasted three days (October 16-19, 1813) and which went down in history as the "Battle of the Nations", the allies crushed Napoleon and obliged him to retreat. Napoleon's Empire by this time was in ruins and by 1814 the theatre of war had been transferred to French soil. Napoleon displayed amazing energy and bold leadership during the campaign of 1814, but while he gained several minor victories it was no longer in his power to reverse the overall course of the war.

On March 31, 1814, the allied forces led by Alexander of Russia on a white steed marched triumphantly into Paris where they were met by a chastened and shattered people. Napoleon, acknowledging at last that his marshals no longer believed victory was within reach, signed an act of abdication at Fontainebleau, and was exiled to Elba, which was ceded to him for life.

The allied monarchs decided that the French throne should be restored to the Bourbons. The brother of Louis XVI, Count of Provence, who had been living in exile for 25 years, was brought to Paris with an escort of allied troops and proclaimed King Louis XVIII of France.

Chapter Seven

REACTION IN EUROPE AND THE REVOLUTIONARY LIBERATION MOVEMENTS OF THE 1820s AND 1830s

The Congress of Vienna

After Napoleon's Empire had been finally crushed, the destiny of Europe was not to be decided by the peoples who had fought for their freedom but by monarchs and ministers. In October 1814, a Congress of the European powers was opened in Vienna, attended by 216 representatives of all the European states with the exception of Turkey. This was the first congress ever to be attended by so many delegates. Yet among this large number there was not one democrat. No spokesman of the people was to be heard at this congress: it was sovereigns and their representatives who congregated in Vienna and who adopted decisions against the interests of their peoples.

The decisive role at the Congress was played by Tsar Alexander, the Austrian Chancellor Metternich (1773-1859), the English Prime Minister, Lord Castlereagh, and Talleyrand and Prince von Hardenberg who represented France and Prussia respectively. Nothing of importance was decided at the plenary sessions. The Congress was in session almost a whole year but most of that time was devoted to lavish receptions, balls and other forms of entertainment. In between the dancing, secret tête-à-tête negotiations were conducted which were to decide the destinies of millions.

The main principle which united the majority of those taking part in the Congress and coloured the decisions adopted was that of legitimism, i.e., the restoration of the "legitimate" rights of former monarchs who had been deprived of their kingdoms. This principle of legitimism provided the powers of reaction with their ideological weapon, which they used in order to justify the reversal of the main political and territorial changes which had been introduced by the revolution and the Napoleonic wars.

In defiance of the national interests of the peoples of Europe and in complete disregard of their demands, the Congress of Vienna recarved the map of Europe. Belgium was made part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and Norway part of the Kingdom of Sweden. Poland was once more partitioned by Russia, Prussia and Austria. Prussia made territorial gains at the expense of Saxony and a number of other German states. Austria regained all she had lost and in addition received the Kingdom of Lombardy and Venetia. Italy, which Metternich referred to disdainfully as a "geographical concept" was divided up into a number of small states ruled over by members of ancient dynasties. The Congress also recognised Britain as the rightful ruler of Cape Province at the southern tip of Africa, the islands of Ceylon and Malta and other colonial possessions which she had seized.

The hated Bourbon dynasty was restored in France, Spain and the Kingdom of Naples, and in other states too, dynasties which had been driven into exile were reinstalled. The principle of legitimism now assured the forces of reaction a free hand, and the seizure of territory by force by the great powers was to be viewed from then on as a perfectly legitimate practice.

The Hundred Days

In March 1815 one of the balls in Vienna was interrupted by a piece of stunning news. It was whispered that Napoleon had escaped from Elba, landed in France on March 1st and was marching on Paris. These rumours were soon confirmed. So great was the hatred of the French people for Louis XVIII who had been installed on the throne with the help of foreign bayonets and for the émigré nobles who had returned with him that Napoleon was able to gain control of the whole of France within three weeks without firing a single shot, and march in triumph to Paris.

This news put the whole of Europe into a state of ferment. The story went that when the news of Napoleon's landing in the Gulf of Juan in the south of France spread as far as Eastern Prussia, the Prussian landowners started hurriedly packing their trunks, planning to seek refuge in the depths of Siberia. In Vienna this news put an immediate stop to all disagreements and eight powers signed a declaration condemning Napoleon's action as illegal. Another anti-French coalition was formed on the spot within a month's time, and the armies of a united Europe set out to confront Napoleon.

Napoleon had one chance left open to him faced as he was by this mighty coalition and that was to rely on popular support



The Battle of Waterloo. Engraving

and wage a revolutionary war against the European monarchies. The French people was more than willing to trust its fortunes to such a cause. However, Napoleon himself was afraid of popular aspirations and revolutionary war. "I have no desire to be a king of the Jacquerie," he stated. Rejecting this kind of war Napoleon threw away his last and only chance of overcoming the numerical superiority of the coalition armies. Napoleon was crushed once and for all at the battle of Waterloo on June 18, 1815. On June 22nd, he signed another declaration of abdication. This second reign of his had lasted for a hundred days, after which he was sent into exile on the remote island of Saint Helena, where he died in 1821.

The Holy Alliance and European Reaction

In September 1815 Tsar Alexander I, the Austrian Emperor Francis I and the Prussian King Friedrich Wilhelm III signed a document which laid the foundation of the Holy Alliance, which the majority of the monarchs of Europe were later to join. The Holy Alliance was an alliance of European monarchs united in their aim to keep down revolutionary and national liberation movements. It was the most reactionary of all the international institutions that had so far come into being: its one and only goal was to avert, root out and crush "revolutionary sedition" wherever it might happen to raise its head.

The Holy Alliance was backed up by all the forces of European reaction and encouraged them to wage battle with the "spirit of free-thinking". The Church, in particular the Catholic Church with its all-pervasive tentacles, the mighty Jesuit order, a widespread police system of secret investigations, espionage, informers and anonymous letters, all this was made use of in the drive to root out the "revolutionary heresy".

The reactionary policies pursued by the feudal nobility were designed to reverse the course of history, as if everything that had taken place during the Revolution had never been, and to restore the old order that had existed before the storming of the Bastille. Reactionary ideologists mocked at the literature of the Enlightenment and tried to set up as a counter-weight to it "all-redeeming faith", propagating humble submission to absolutist power. Gabriel Bonald demonstrated in his works the need to restore the former class system and power of the Church. Ludwig Haller pressed for unquestioning obedience to the power of absolute monarchs; Joseph de Maistre extolled the Inquisition as the bastion of society, condemned the natural sciences, and proposed that there should be a ban on spreading knowledge among the common people.

However, the activities of such reactionaries were not limited to words alone. The Bourbons, who were with good reason regarded as "having learnt nothing and forgotten nothing" during their twenty-five years of exile started a campaign of ruthless persecution of prominent figures of the revolutionary movement and the Napoleonic era. Many such individuals were summarily executed without trial and extraordinary tribunals pronounced more than ten thousand harsh sentences. In 1825, during the reign of Charles X (1824-1830) a law was introduced decreeing that former émigrés would be rewarded as much as a thousand million francs by way of compensation for the lands which had been confiscated from them by the revolutionary government. That same year a further law was passed enacting stern penalties for sacrilege or acts perpetrated against the church: in extreme cases such sentences even went as far as the guillotine, after the victim had first had his right hand cut off. In Spain, Ferdinand VII (1814-1833) abolished the constitution of 1812 and reintroduced a regime of repressive absolutism. Once again Spain was in the hands of a feudal nobility and the Catholic grandees; auto-da-fés were once more the order of the day. Similar developments were to be observed in the Italian kingdoms. Even in England, which had not in fact signed the Holy Alliance and had the reputation of being the most progressive country in Europe, strong reaction set in. In August 1819, at St. Peter's Fields in Manchester, the police opened fire on a gathering of unarmed workers. Fifteen people were killed and 400 wounded. This cruel reprisal of the military against defenceless workers was ironically christened the Peterloo Massacre. Parliament at once adopted the reactionary Six Combination Acts which did away with freedom of assembly and introduced strict limitations on the freedom of the press. These laws were referred to by the common people as the Six Gagging Acts.

Ideological and Political Struggle Against the Forces of Reaction

The arbitrary sway of feudal and clerical reaction aroused the indignation of all the great minds of the time. The great English poet George Byron (1788-1824) in his outstanding works *Childe Harold*, *Don Juan* and *The Age of Bronze* subjected the hypocritical, insidious world of reaction holding sway in England to bitter, savage criticism. With complete justification he was to write of himself: "And I will war, at least in words with . . . every despotism in every nation." Another fine English poet, Shelley (1792-1822), also openly opposed the powers that be. The famous French writer Stendhal (Henri Beyle, 1783-1842) in his novels *Le*

Rouge et le Noir and *La Chartreuse de Parme* painted a graphic picture of the all-powerful black forces of reaction and religious oppression. The great Spanish painter Francisco Goya (1746-1828), who devoted his whole life to depicting the dread world of the inquisition and obscurantism, was ever mindful of his responsibility before the Spanish people. The noble themes of civic responsibility and love of freedom inspired the outstanding German composer Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827).

That which was expressed by the scores of great artists and writers, was also experienced in perhaps less astute and coherent form by hundreds of thousands and often millions of Europe's poor, who but recently had been breathing the heady air of revolutionary ferment and the liberation struggle and were now subjected to savage police and religious persecution. The peoples of Europe were not prepared to reconcile themselves with this arbitrary return to the hated patterns of the past.

The Revolutions of the 1820s

However savage this wave of reaction might be, it was not in a position to turn back the clock of history. The far-reaching processes which had affected the very fabric of European and American society had led to a rapid consolidation of bourgeois social patterns, more progressive than the feudal ones which had preceded them, and to the emergence of a more pronounced class and national consciousness among the peoples of the world. The fierce reprisals of this feudo-clerical reaction served merely to crystallise this new consciousness. This situation was to give rise to a number of revolutions and revolutionary movements in the 1820s and '30s. The results they achieved varied considerably and many were suppressed, but nevertheless they all influenced the subsequent fate of the peoples who rose up to defend their freedom.

The Revolution of 1820-1823 in Spain

In January 1820, near the town of Cádiz, one of the Spanish regiments under the command of Rafael Riego y Nuñez (1785-1823) mutinied. Colonel Riego was a valiant defender of the Spanish people's freedom and together with other officers he set about preparing a revolt. There were a number of like-minded officers in other regiments and the uprising which broke out in Cádiz soon spread throughout the whole country. The chief demand of the officers was that the constitution of 1812 be reintroduced, and Ferdinand VII was forced to grant this concession.

In July 1820, the Cortes (legislative assembly) was convened in Madrid and Riego was elected its president. The Cortes then proceeded to do away with the inquisition and restore the freedoms laid down in the 1812 constitution.

These were all important developments but they did not go far enough. Spain was above all an agrarian country and the peasants, deprived of land and forced to live in abject poverty by their masters, naturally hoped first and foremost for a solution of the agrarian question. The officers, however, who were in the main liberal nobles or bourgeois were loath to touch the problem of landownership. With their hopes shattered, the peasants were unwilling to support the revolution with any enthusiasm. This was to prove fatal for the revolution's further progress. In the autumn of 1822, at the Congress of Verona, the Holy Alliance passed a resolution to crush the Spanish revolution by force. Bourbon France was to undertake this punitive mission.

In the spring of 1823, the French army of intervention together with Spanish counter-revolutionary forces marched through the country and captured Madrid. By the autumn of that year their mission was accomplished—the revolution had been crushed. Riego was executed and died a hero's death. The famous "Riego March" written by the Spanish composer Huerta was to become the battle hymn of many generations of Spanish revolutionaries, and in 1931 it was made the National Anthem of the Spanish Republic. Although the revolution of 1820-1823 was crushed, it was to call forth a wide movement demanding social and political change throughout the rest of the world. Byron, Pushkin and the French democrat poet Béranger sang the praises of the defenders of the Spanish revolution, and bitterly condemned the Holy Alliance, now stained with the blood of the innocent.

The Italian Revolutions of 1820-1821

A wave of revolutionary activity was to sweep the cities of Italy at almost the same time as the revolution in Spain took place. These outbreaks were prepared by the secret Carbonari organisation, which by this time had set up a network of conspiratorial cells or lodges, subject to strict discipline, throughout the country. Brave, determined men joined the Carbonari, men who were not afraid to risk their lives for the sake of their countrymen. The majority of them were members of the bourgeois intelligentsia or the liberal nobility. The weakness of the Carbonari, as had been the case with the Spanish revolutionaries, was their isolation from the masses and their failure to appreciate the fundamental importance of the agrarian problem and landownership.

In July 1820, one of the regiments near Naples mutinied. It was soon joined by troops under General Pepe who was a member of the Carbonari, and Pepe's action was followed by various other regiments. King Ferdinand IV hastily granted a constitution and vowed that he would rule according to its principles, and meanwhile lost no time in turning to the Holy Alliance for help. The members of the congresses of the Holy Alliance held at the end of 1820 and the beginning of 1821, who had been waiting eagerly for a pretext to crush the revolutionary movement in Italy entrusted Austria with the task of putting down the revolution in the Kingdom of Naples.

When the Austrian punitive expedition invaded Italy in March 1821, revolution also broke out in Piedmont. Here the movement was also led by officers and members of the liberal nobility. Count Santa Rosa, the leader of the movement, was not prepared to summon the people to take up arms and neither he nor the Neapolitan revolutionaries were able with their limited forces to put up an effective resistance to the Austrian army of intervention. In March in Naples, and in April in Piedmont the revolutionary movements were crushed. There followed a wave of executions and cruel persecution against all those who had taken part.

Both the Spanish and the Italian revolutions were crushed by counter-revolutionary armies of intervention mustered by the Holy Alliance. This alliance was clearly to be interpreted as the convenient executioner of the European monarchs. The fate of both movements was determined by the fact that they were led by a small minority of the bourgeois class and that their leaders were unwilling to rely on the support of the popular masses.

The National Liberation Movement in Greece

The Greek people had for a number of centuries been at the mercy of Turkish rulers. Now they too rose up against their oppressors. In March 1821 an uprising broke out and spread rapidly, and in January 1822 a national assembly convened in Epidaurus declared Greece independent. This was only the beginning of the struggle. The Turks struck back with ruthless savagery. The whole Greek population of the island of Chios which numbered over 100,000 was either massacred or sold into slavery. This bestial massacre was immortalised by the famous French painter Delacroix in one of his canvases. Large forces of the Turkish army were then sent out to put down the insurgents.

The Greeks fought valiantly for the freedom of their homeland. Detachments of guerillas dealt the Turkish oppressors se-

rious blows. The strength of the Greek liberation movement lay in the fact that it was a popular movement in which the whole people took part. Many fine leaders came from the masses, of which Makriyannis was undoubtedly the most outstanding. Another skilful commander was General Kolokotronis, who also enjoyed wide popular support.

The valiant struggle of the Greek people won the support and sympathy of progressive circles everywhere. Byron was to fall fighting for Greek independence, and Pushkin and Shelley were both inspired by Greek heroism. The members of the Holy Alliance meanwhile, although the Greeks were their fellow Christians, regarded them as lawless insurgents.

In 1825, a powerful Egyptian army under Ibrahim Pasha moved against Greece. The Sultan's government, not strong enough to cope with the situation on its own, turned to its vassal state Egypt, on Metternich's advice, to seek help in crushing the Greek insurgents. The Egyptian army advanced slowly across the country, destroying everything in its path.

Yet the Greek patriots fought bravely on, preferring death to surrender. The fighting became more and more desperate. Conflicting interests which had arisen between the European powers in connection with the Middle East and rivalry for spheres of influence in Greece led them to intervene in the Greek issue. On October 20, 1827, a combined fleet of English, French and Russian warships completely destroyed the Egyptian and Turkish fleets at Navarino. The war between Turkey and Russia which began in 1828 kept a large proportion of the Turkish troops out of Greece and eventually the Greek people was to emerge victorious from its just war of liberation. In 1830 Greece was recognised as an independent sovereign state.

The War of Liberation Waged by the Peoples of the Spanish Colonies in America

Further successes in the revolutionary movement for national liberation were also being scored on the far side of the Atlantic. The peoples of Central and South America had been exposed for more than two centuries to cruel exploitation by Spanish and Portuguese conquerors, who had plundered the fertile land and vast natural resources of Latin America. Ever since the end of the eighteenth century, and in particular during the North American War of Independence and the French Revolution, the liberation movement in the Spanish colonies had been gaining ground. The overthrow by the French of the Bourbon dynasty in Spain provided favourable conditions for the commencement of an open struggle against the oppressors.



Simon Bolivar. Portrait

The First Stage of the Liberation Movement

In 1810-1815 the first stage of the wars of liberation in the Spanish colonies in America were fought out. The Creoles, Mestizos and Indians rallied to the struggle for the liberation of their native lands.

On April 11, 1810, a revolutionary junta under Francisco de Miranda (1756-1816) who had taken part in the French revolution organised an uprising in Caracas which was soon to spread to the whole of Venezuela. This uprising served to spark off revolutionary outbreaks throughout the continent. In May a Provisional Government of the united provinces of La Plata (later to be renamed Argentina) was convened by a junta in Buenos Aires.

The liberation movement in La Plata was led by Mariano Moreno and later José de San-Martin (1778-1850) and Belgrano. The war of liberation then spread from La Plata to Uruguay and Paraguay, who also declared themselves independent. In September 1810 a liberation movement began in Mexico under the leadership of the village priest Miguel Hidalgo.

The struggle against the Spanish colonialists was a very grim one and the odds were now on one side, now on the other. In the course of the liberation war Miranda and Hidalgo were to perish at the hands of Spanish executioners. The legendary hero Simon Bolivar (1783-1830) was to win immortal fame in the struggle for the liberation of Venezuela. However, after Ferdinand VII had been reinstalled on the Spanish throne the colonialists were to receive considerable reinforcements from the mother country and go over on to the offensive. In 1815 all strongholds of the revolution were crushed, with the exception of La Plata.

The Second Stage of the War of Liberation. Bolivar's Expeditions

In November 1816 Simon Bolivar, after returning to Venezuela from the island of Haiti with a detachment of his supporters, liberated the town of Angostura in the Orinoco delta and from there set out on his famous expedition to free Venezuela. Bolivar declared the abolition of slavery and in 1817 announced that all llaneros (peasants) who joined his army would be granted land holdings after the war. These progressive measures brought Bolivar's army a large influx of volunteers. Over 5,000 volunteers of different nationalities also came from Europe to help the South American liberation army. Bolivar succeeded in making his liberation army a well-disciplined and efficient combat force. The Spanish colonialists were thus confronted with an invincible army of dedicated fighters ready to give their lives in the name of freedom.

In 1819 the Angostura Congress proclaimed the Republic of Great Colombia, incorporating Venezuela and Nueva Granada. The illustrious Bolivar was elected president of the new republic. Meanwhile, a large part of the country still remained to be won from the Spaniards. Bolivar's army embarked on its heroic expedition across the snow-capped Andes. Many of these brave champions of freedom perished in the course of this hazardous journey, beset with countless perils. In 1822 Bolivar succeeded in liberating Quito (Ecuador) which was then also incorporated into Great Colombia.



LATIN AMERICA, 1809-1828

The Liberation of La Plata, Chile and Peru

The Spanish colonialists also launched an offensive in the South. On July 9, 1816, at the Congress of Tucuman a Declaration of the Independence of the United Provinces of La Plata was

adopted. Another army of freedom fighters, this time under the leadership of another talented commander and hero of the liberation movement José de San-Martin, also made a valiant crossing of the Andes in the course of its successful struggle against the Spaniards. In Chile they were to be joined by the local champions of freedom led by Bernardo O'Higgins. At the battles of Chacabuco (February 1817) and Maipú (April 1818) San-Martin's army defeated the Spaniards. These victories were followed by the declaration of Chilean independence.

Meanwhile the stronghold of the Spanish rulers in Peru still held firm and it was here that San-Martin and Bolivar led their armies in 1821. The war against the Spaniards in Peru was to last for several years, until Simon Bolivar finally succeeded in breaking the stubborn resistance of the Spanish colonialists. On August 6, 1824, the Spaniards suffered a decisive defeat at Junín, which marked the turning point in their resistance. In 1825 Alto (Upper) Peru was liberated and named Bolivia in honour of the commander of the liberation armies. In January 1826 the last Spanish garrison in the town of Callao surrendered.

At last the rule of the Spanish colonialists in South America was at an end. During the same period (1821-1824) Mexico and Central America also gained their independence. After a period of revolt against the Portuguese (1817-1822) Brazil also gained her independence.

The Historical Significance of the Latin American Wars of Liberation

The heroic liberation struggle which had lasted for more than 15 years freed the whole of Latin America, with the exception of Cuba and Puerto Rico, from Spanish and Portuguese rule. This victory was due in the main to the fact that the masses had united in a just struggle against their hated oppressors. The victory of this revolution in Latin America was of major international significance, making possible the establishment of a number of new independent republics in the New World and thus serving to seriously undermine the forces of international reaction led by the Holy Alliance. The victory of the Latin American revolutions dealt a crushing blow to two vast colonial empires—those of Spain and Portugal—and represented an important stage in the struggle of the colonial peoples against their oppressors.

Chapter Eight

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CAPITALISM IN EUROPE AND AMERICA. THE GROWTH OF THE WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT AND THE BIRTH OF SCIENTIFIC COMMUNISM

The Development of Capitalism in Western Europe and the United States

The desperate efforts of the forces of feudal reaction in Europe to stifle emergent social forces and entrench feudal absolutism for ever were to prove vain. Neither the Holy Alliance, nor the restored monarchies of Europe, nor Nicholas I, the all-powerful ruler of the Russian Empire, were in a position to hold back the deep-rooted processes of capitalist development which were moving forward at an ever faster pace.

The industrial revolution which had begun in the second half of the eighteenth century in Britain and then at the beginning of the nineteenth century had rapidly spread to the rest of Europe—France, the German and Italian states, Austria and Russia—had also made great strides in the young republic on the other side of the Atlantic—the United States. Machines were ousting manual labour everywhere. New inventions and improvements in the textile and metal-working industries and in the construction of engines, and the emergence of the engineering industry (i.e., the construction of machines to produce other machines) brought about a rapid acceleration in production processes. The technological revolution in the sphere of transport which began in the nineteenth century was also to make an enormous impact on all branches of industry.

In 1814 George Stephenson, an English self-taught engineer from a working-class background, built the first steam engine. It was able to move at a speed of 4 miles an hour, and even after a number of improvements had been introduced it was still a common practice 15 years later to organise races between steam engines and horses. Yet this clumsy, formidable-looking contraption with its great boiler and enormous funnel had a great future

before it. In 1829 the first railway worked purely by steam was opened over a forty-mile distance between Manchester and Liverpool. In 1831 railway construction began in the United States, in 1832 in France, and in 1837 in Russia. In 1840 the world's railways already had a total length of six thousand miles and the next few decades saw extraordinarily rapid growth: 30,000 miles in 1850, 70,000 by 1860 and 140,000 by 1870.

This amazing expansion of rail transport was of tremendous significance: it furthered the growth of internal and foreign trade, greatly increased the demand for metal and fuel thereby promoting the development of the corresponding industries, and finally served to accelerate the industrialisation of a large number of countries.

At almost the same time the invention of the steamship was to cause another revolution in transport. The first steamship, the *Clermont*, was built in 1807 by Robert Fulton. It made its maiden voyage down the river Hudson at a speed of five miles an hour. However, the steamship was soon to be perfected and made more powerful to enable it to undertake long voyages. The first steamship crossing of the Atlantic was made in 1818 by the *Savannah* which made the voyage from the United States to Liverpool in twenty-seven days. Twenty years later, in 1838, the *Great Western* made the crossing in a mere 14 days. Later this time was to be halved again.

As technological innovations were improved and refined, in particular the steamship, the large stretches of water which had formerly presented major barriers to communications gradually came to facilitate the same.

The Social Consequences of the Industrial Revolution

The rapid development of capitalism in the nineteenth century led to the growth of large industrial towns in Europe and the United States. The mass of the workers began to concentrate in the towns where the large factories were. In England, where industrialisation had been particularly rapid and was completed in the main by the first half of the nineteenth century, the accompanying changes were most clear-cut and unambiguous. Two main classes emerged, the industrial bourgeoisie and the industrial proletariat, while the remaining classes—the peasantry, the nobility, and the petty bourgeoisie—soon came to play a minor role. The bourgeoisie and the proletariat were soon to emerge as the two main social classes in other countries where capitalism was taking shape—such as France, Germany and the United States.

However, in such countries the peasantry was still numerically superior to the industrial proletariat and power remained in the hands of the pre-capitalist class groups, the nobility and the landowners.

The Bourgeois Revolutions and Reforms of the 1830s

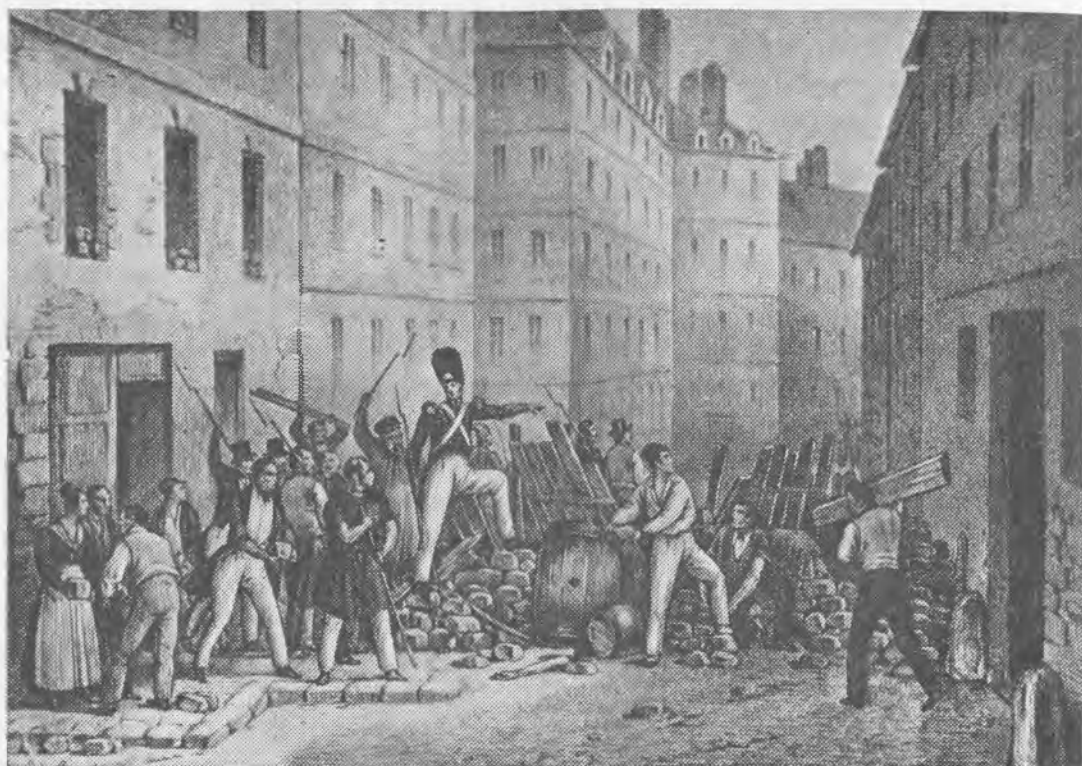
The rapid development of capitalism in the nineteenth century had served to consolidate the wealth and power of the bourgeoisie. With enormous capital and funds at its disposal, the bourgeoisie was unwilling to reconcile itself with its relative lack of rights in the majority of the European monarchies, and began to aspire either to a decisive political role or at least to participation in state administration.

The bourgeoisie was still employing cautious tactics at this stage. While subjecting the working class to ruthless exploitation and profiting at the expense of underpaid workers, the bourgeoisie had already come to fear the working people. The monarchy, despite its presumptuous arrogance, already appeared less dangerous to the bourgeoisie than the workers, since with the former they could always reach some sort of agreement while there was no hope of them ever being able to come to terms with the workers, whom they bled dry, for the two classes of exploiters and exploited were quite irreconcilable in their enmity, that of conflicting class interests.

This was why in its striving to achieve state power at this period the bourgeoisie sought to avoid revolution and concentrated instead on reforms introduced from above without the participation of the people.

The July Revolution in France—1830

The bourgeoisie was not always successful in its efforts to avoid open revolution, as was witnessed by events in France in July 1830. Charles X, who was reputed to have said: "I would rather chop wood than reign after the fashion of the King of England", disregarding all opposition went out of his way to restore the unlimited autocracy of the past, with a whole series of reactionary laws which aroused the people's indignation. The bourgeoisie was not eager for revolution but the people took to the streets and started setting up barricades. Realising that he was powerless to deal with the situation, Charles X fled to England, the country on which he had but shortly before poured such bitter scorn.



The Paris Barricades, July 28, 1830. Etching

As soon as the old order had been overthrown, bourgeois politicians came out into the open after lying low during the three days of barricade fighting, and hastened to take power into their own hands. Before the people had had time to realise what was happening, a new regime had been forced on the country—yet another monarchy, but this time with a new King of a new dynasty—Louis Philippe of Orleans.

This new King, “the king of barricades” as the people nicknamed him or the “royal bourgeois” as he was referred to in wealthy circles, was a former duke and a close relative of Charles X. He was held to be the richest and most miserly man in the whole of France and his wealth defied the imagination. Nevertheless, after coming to the throne, Louis Philippe disregarded the old custom by which the King put his private means into the Royal treasury as a symbol of the “marriage” between the King and his realm, and made haste to ensure that his fortune remained in safe hands, by dividing part of it amongst his sons and placing the rest in a bank. Such traits of his were to meet with the approval of the big bourgeoisie. The July monarchy (as Louis Philippe’s reign came to be called) was to become a bourgeois monarchy. However, it was not the whole of the bourgeoisie that was dominant and not even the industrial section of that class but the financial aristocracy—the financiers, bankers and magnates, men

with vast fortunes. This was a time when ready cash held sway, when gold ruled supreme. In his famous *Comedie Humaine* the great French writer Honoré de Balzac (1799-1850) was to paint a superb picture of the life and moeurs of this society where everything was subordinated to the power of money.

The English Reform Bill of 1832

In England, where the ruling classes were particularly experienced in political manoeuvring they made sure that no revolution took place. At the end of the 1820s and in particular after the 1830 revolution in France, when the democratic and revolutionary movement became particularly active, the ruling party—the Tories—which represented the most powerful landowning interests, realised that some kind of compromise solution was required. In 1832 a parliamentary reform was introduced. It was widely acclaimed as a great boon to the whole English people, but in actual fact it merely served to permit members of the industrial bourgeoisie to play a direct part in parliamentary affairs. It was only the bourgeoisie and the party which shared its views—the Whigs—which benefitted from this reform. The working class which had fought for this reform was to gain nothing.

A New Wave of Colonial Expansion

The rapid development of capitalism and the growing role of the bourgeoisie in the political affairs of the country led to a new wave of colonial expansion. The bourgeoisie needed new cheap sources of raw materials and new markets. Colonial wars were regarded as highly profitable undertakings.

The most developed of the capitalist countries started a new expansion drive with Britain in the forefront. In 1829, after a war with Burma, the British colonialists succeeded in capturing Assam. In 1839 they seized Aden. During the 'thirties colonial wars were waged in Afghanistan and parts of India: in 1843 Sind was captured and in 1846 Kashmir and a large part of the Punjab. From 1839 to 1842 Britain engaged in the notorious Opium War, during which she succeeded in gaining a strong foothold in China. Hongkong was seized and China was obliged to import opium which brought enormous profits to British traders and sign a one-sided trade agreement. In 1840 Britain annexed New Zealand and in 1842-1843 Sarawak on Borneo, and Natal in South Africa. In 1830 France embarked on the occupation of Algeria and then

joined in the colonial wars of plunder against China. In 1846 the United States instigated a war against its virtually defenceless neighbour, Mexico, and robbed it of the sizable territories of New Mexico and California. By this time colonialism had become the familiar companion of capitalism.

The Position of the Working Class

While the bourgeoisie was gaining fabulous riches and profiteering from colonial wars of plunder and its predatory exploitation of the working class, the position of the working class at that early stage of capitalism was one of extreme hardship. The ranks of the working class by this time had swelled considerably, but as yet it had no experience of political struggle, and was still unorganised and only dimly aware of its position and historical role. The entrepreneurs of that period who exploited the defencelessness of the workers and the surplus of cheap labour went out of their way to squeeze the absolute maximum out of those in their employ within the shortest possible time. Exploitation reached unbelievable lengths. The workers worked for 16-18 hours a day, and wide use was also made of female and child labour. Backbreaking toil, inhuman living conditions, chronic undernourishment and poverty—all threatened the workers of that time with physical and spiritual destruction.

The Beginning of an Independent Working-Class Movement

The instinct of self-preservation spurred the workers on to take up the struggle against their masters. However, the first generations of nineteenth-century workers lacked the experience which subsequent generations were to turn to good use. They were as yet unaware of the source of the evil they were faced with, of who was responsible for their sufferings and hardship. At first they were under the illusion that their intolerable position stemmed from the introduction of machinery. The first spontaneous manifestation of the class struggle took the form of the destruction of machinery. The first two decades of the nineteenth century saw the development in England of what was known as the Luddite movement—so called because it was supposed to have been started by a young apprentice named Ned Ludd—whose adherents set about destroying machines. However, the workers soon came to realise that machines were not the source of their suffering, and that destroying them did not make life any easier.

The Lyons Revolts of 1831 and 1834

In France the position of the workers was just as intolerable as in England. In 1831 in Lyons, the centre of the silk industry, the local weavers driven to despair by their appalling poverty rose up in protest and captured the town. They marched along with black banners bearing the words: "We are prepared to die fighting for the right to live and work!" This banner showed just how modest and limited were the demands of the workers at that early stage. This uprising was savagely crushed by government troops.

In 1834 the Lyons weavers came out into the streets again, but this time they were better organised and demanded not merely better working conditions but a republic as well. This uprising was also suppressed.

The Chartist Movement

In England many workers supported the bourgeois democrats in their campaign for parliamentary reform. But when the 1832 Reform Bill brought no improvement in their living and working conditions, which, on the contrary, started to deteriorate as time went on, deep disillusionment set in.

While losing their faith in the bourgeoisie which had deceived them, the workers still had faith in Parliament. In 1836-1837 first in London and then in other towns a campaign for universal suffrage developed. The workers hoped that if universal suffrage was introduced they would gain a majority in Parliament and then the whole situation would change. Such hopes were however quite illusory. Yet the British workers who at that time still had little experience of politics believed in these illusions and they were concerned above all with how to persuade Parliament to adopt laws introducing universal suffrage. In 1837 the workers' leaders drew up a Charter containing the main demands they were planning to put before Parliament. Then they started to collect signatures for this Charter. On three separate occasions in 1839, 1842 and 1848 this Charter was presented to Parliament, each time with a still larger number of signatures. The first time 1,200,000 signatures were collected, the second 3,300,000 and the third time almost five million. The sheets of signatures were so large and heavy that in 1842, for example, they were carried into Parliament in an enormous crate by more than twenty people.

The collection of signatures and the discussion of the political and social issues involved brought about an unprecedented ad-



The Chartists march towards Parliament

vance in the workers' movement. In the evenings, by torchlight, the workers gathered to hear political addresses and to discuss the situation. Enormous Chartist demonstrations made their way down the quiet streets of English towns at night. For the first time the workers came to realise what a mighty force they represented when they acted together in an organised way. In 1840 there was even an attempt to found a united Chartist party, the first ever working-class party.

As the Chartist movement grew and gained ever wider support drawing lessons from its successes and failures, the workers came to a clearer understanding of the world around them and lost many of their former illusions. The second Charter included social as well as political demands—"knife and fork" questions, as they were then called. Hopes were voiced that it might be possible to gain the desired objectives by means of a general strike. The Chartist movement was led by capable, dedicated champions of the working-class cause: O'Brien, Feargus O'Connor, G. J. Harney and Ernest Jones. However, even these outstanding workers' leaders failed to lead their followers along the correct path. The Chartists had not yet reached a clear understanding of the role of the working class and the need for coherent organisation.

The Chartist movement, which reached its peak in the spring of 1848, proved unable to make full use of its wide influence and



KARL MARX, 1867

soon began to decline. However, the first independent mass political movement of the proletariat was to serve as an inspiring example. After the Chartist movement, the struggle for working-class emancipation was to enter a new, more advanced stage.

Utopian Socialism

The writers of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution had held out promises of the dawn of the "golden age", a reign of reason, freedom and justice. In practice, however, feudal oppression was replaced by merciless capitalist exploitation and the absolute rule of money. The marked contrast between alluring promises and grim reality gave food for thought to many progressive individuals of those times.

Even at that early stage of capitalist development there were already a number of enlightened minds who had grasped the vices of the capitalist system and announced the dawn of a new, better and more just social order. Later they were to be referred to as Utopian Socialists.

Among these men three great thinkers take pride of place—Saint-Simon (1760-1825), Fourier (1772-1837) and Robert Owen (1771-1858). Saint-Simon was from an aristocratic family and had been educated accordingly; during the revolution he had been engaged in commerce and had then become an inventory clerk in a pawnshop. He was thus able to gain experience of the living and working conditions of all sections of society and see at close quarters all the horrors of the new order. Saint-Simon, Fourier and Owen, who all lived in advanced capitalist countries, subjected the capitalist world to harsh and utterly justified criticism and described their concept of a just society of the future. The great significance of their works lies in the fact that they called upon people to free themselves from the fetters of capitalist bondage. However, they failed to grasp the right ways to go about this and to attain a better society. All that they proposed was naive and impracticable. They were not even aware of which class, which social force was in a position to transform the world, to do away with oppression and liberate mankind from exploitation and the concomitant social evils.

German Classical Philosophy

In the German states, where economic development was advancing slowly and class contradictions had not yet brought about an open revolutionary struggle, far-reaching social processes and the

mounting tide of social discontent were to find their expression first and foremost in philosophy and literature. The Golden Age of German literature at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century was linked above all with the names of two great writers—Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) and Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805). The most prominent figures among the German philosophers of that period were Friedrich Schelling (1775-1854) and Georg Hegel (1770-1831). While Hegel himself remained an idealist, he introduced the dialectical method into philosophical thought and his influence on the intellectual life of his age was immense.

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. The Birth of Scientific Communism

Only after the workers' movement had gained considerable experience and the working class had become more organised, was it possible for a genuinely scientific theory to come into being which would prove compatible with the historic mission of the proletariat. This theory was to provide a systematic exposition of the laws of social development and the ways in which the transition to a superior classless social order, that of communism, could be achieved. The authors of this theory were the great leaders of the working class Karl Marx and Frederick Engels.

Karl Marx, the son of a lawyer, was born on May 5, 1818, in the German town of Trier. While still at school and during his student years Marx was to reveal striking gifts. The path to illustrious scholarship, which would have brought him honour, fame and riches, was open to him, but this was not the path Marx chose: from an early age he devoted himself wholeheartedly to the revolutionary struggle and turned his great mind to the study of the laws of social development. At the age of 25 he left Germany and went to live first in Paris and Brussels, before finally settling in England. His friendship with Frederick Engels (1820-1895) dates from the year 1844; Engels was the son of a factory owner who instead of complying with his father's wishes and devoting his energies to the pursuit of wealth, dedicated himself like Marx to the revolutionary struggle. Marx and Engels read and studied many of the works that had been written on the social science by their predecessors, subjecting them to critical analysis. They also made a study of the history of the revolutionary movement and the theory of socialism with particular reference to the French Revolution, German classical philosophy and English political economy. After critically analysing former

achievements in the social sciences, with direct reference to the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat, Marx and Engels created a qualitatively completely new theory, that of scientific socialism, and elaborated tactics for the proletarian struggle. Progressive bourgeois scholars before them had already revealed the class struggle in social development but it was Marx and Engels who—after arriving at a materialist interpretation of history and formulating the inherent economic laws of capitalist society—were the first to understand and substantiate the fact that the class destined to transform the world and the only truly revolutionary class, free from all self-interested and egoistic goals, was the proletariat. “The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains.” Being the most revolutionary class, the proletariat was destined to become the leader and champion of all the oppressed and exploited, of all the working masses, to lead them in the struggle to destroy the capitalist order.

Marxism was to demonstrate that the proletariat was the only class which would make use of the power it gained not only to promote its own class interests but also the interests of mankind, of society as a whole. After overthrowing the bourgeoisie, the working class would establish its own dictatorship, the dictatorship of the proletariat, which would hold sway until the transition to a classless society, to communism, had been effected. This new social theory elaborated on a scientific basis by Marx and Engels was to possess immeasurable significance for mankind’s future; this theory was to become a powerful force once it gripped the imagination of the masses.

The Communist League

Before Marx and Engels the labour movement and socialism had been developing different paths. In 1847 the first international proletarian organisation, the Communist League, was set up with the active participation of Marx and Engels. Side by side with the then popular slogan of one of the Utopian Socialist organisations “All Men Are Brothers” a new slogan was held aloft: “Workers of the World, Unite!” At first sight it may have seemed that the Utopian Socialist slogan was of a broader and more humanistic nature—but could factory owners be regarded as brothers of the workers? Could landowners be regarded as brothers of the peasants or colonialists as brothers of the oppressed Africans and mestizos? “All Men Are Brothers” is a slogan that serves to embellish the real situation, to sow dangerous illusions. The new slogan adopted by the Communist League demonstrated unmistakably that the solution of the tasks of the future was

inextricably linked with the class of the proletariat, united on a world-wide scale.

At the Second Congress of the Communist League, held in London in 1847, Marx and Engels were allotted the task of drawing up a programme for the League. At the beginning of the next year, *Manifesto of the Communist Party* was printed, a slim volume in which Marx and Engels outlined the basic principles of scientific communism. This book had a great future before it: since it was first published over a hundred years ago, more than a hundred different editions have been brought out and it has been translated into almost every language. Yet even in those far-off days when it first appeared, it was to produce an enormous impact. *Manifesto of the Communist Party* meant that henceforward the labour movement and socialism were no longer two separate currents; they merged together and thus came to constitute an invincible force.

Chapter Nine

REVOLUTIONARY FERMENT IN 1848-1849

The revolution of 1830 had dealt the first serious blow at the supremacy of the Holy Alliance, yet it had not undermined its power definitively. The main bastions of this Alliance were the Russian Empire under Nicholas I, Metternich's Austria and the Kingdom of Prussia. Even that very country where the revolution of 1830 had taken place was soon to become yet another stronghold of European reaction. King Louis Philippe attempted to drive from his subjects' minds all memories of the revolutionary origins of the July monarchy. After a number of popular uprisings had been ruthlessly crushed during the 1830s, a period of social and political conservatism and police rule set in. France became a close friend of Austria—a country which was one of the pillars of the Holy Alliance. Guizot, Louis Philippe's Prime Minister, and Prince Metternich, the Austrian Chancellor, were both of the opinion that only with the co-operation of conservative France could anarchy and revolution be successfully contained and the old order preserved.

The Revolutions of 1848 in Europe

Even the combined forces of European reaction were unable to combat revolution with the degree of success for which Guizot, Louis Philippe's Minister, had hoped. The forces of social emancipation long since driven underground were gathering strength and steadily gaining momentum. In 1848 the volcano erupted. The whole of Europe was gripped by revolutionary ferment and the Holy Alliance was shattered irreparably.

The first outbreak of revolution was in Sicily. The hated Bourbon King Ferdinand II, renowned for his ruthless suppression of popular movements, fearing the collapse of his tottering throne hastily agreed to a series of concessions: all reactionary ministers were dismissed and a constitution was promised.

On February 22nd-24th revolution broke out in France. A trivial incident was sufficient to bring thousands of workers out onto the streets. Soon the barricades were up and before long the whole town was in the hands of the insurgents. The proud Guizot, who at the outset referred to the revolt as a storm in a tea-cup, was later obliged to flee from revolutionary Paris disguised as a woman. The next day he was followed by Louis Philippe in a plain carriage. After breaking into the royal palace, the Paris insurgents dragged the king's throne along the cobbled streets of the city to the Bastille where it was ceremoniously burnt amidst triumphant rejoicing.

On March 13th barricades appeared in the streets of Vienna and it was now Metternich's turn to flee. Budapest and Prague followed Vienna's example and soon the whole multinational Austrian Empire was seething with revolutionary ferment. On March 18th, a popular uprising captured Berlin. This victory had been preceded by revolutionary triumphs in a number of western German states. A mighty revolutionary tide was to sweep through the states of Italy. In Lombardy, the insurgent Italians defeated the Austrian occupation forces, and Marshal Radetzky's army was overwhelmed in the course of a popular uprising. The Austrians were driven out of Venetia, which was then proclaimed an independent republic. In England the Chartist movement was at its height. The revolutionary movement also spread to Spain, Switzerland and Belgium; the Poles rose up in protest against the partition of their country. The revolutionary tide was to sweep across the whole of Europe bringing about the downfall of hated political regimes, monarchs and ministers from the Atlantic coast to the borders of Tsar Nicholas's Empire.

The outstanding Russian revolutionary publicist Alexander Herzen wrote on April 20, 1848: "These are remarkable times. My hand trembles as I pick up the newspapers; each day there is something unexpected happening, some new peal of thunder to be heard: a radiant rebirth of mankind or a day of reckoning is at hand. New energy has gripped men's hearts, old hopes have risen once more and courage that will stop at nothing is the order of the day."

The February Revolution in France

At first there was every justification for such jubilant hope. In Paris at the outset of the revolution real power was in the hands of the insurgent working class, which played the decisive role in the overthrow of the monarchy. The workers were still armed and the masters of the streets in the capital. At the demand of the

proletariat and contrary to the intentions of the bourgeois politicians, France was proclaimed Republic on February 24th. Thus the February revolution of 1848 achieved on its second day what it had taken the revolution of 1789 about three years to achieve. A red rosette was attached to the tricolor which bore witness to yet another concession to the proletariat, which was demanding a red flag to keep uppermost in men's minds the fact that the Second Republic must be a "democratic republic of social justice".

The weakness of the French proletariat lay in the fact that, in its wave of revolutionary enthusiasm it was not sufficiently organised or aware of its tasks and goals. Not only the proletarians did not have their own party which might have brought organisation and direction to their struggle, but they did not even have trade unions. A large number of political clubs sprang up, but they had few common aims, and feuds between them were rife. Neither did the proletariat have any real leaders. The majority of the workers blindly followed Louis Blanc, a Utopian Socialist who hoped by means of negotiation and persuasion to wrest social reforms from a bourgeois government.

The bourgeois political leaders who had cowered with fear at the initial stage of the revolution and had hypocritically assured the workers of their fraternal sentiments towards them, made skilful use of the latter's blind trust and lack of organisation. At the outset of the revolution the bourgeois politicians had possessed no real power and they had been obliged to resort to intrigue and cunning manoeuvres. They had succeeded in setting up a provisional government headed by a figure trusted by the people, namely Dupont de l'Éure who had taken part in the revolution of 1789 and was a veteran of the democratic movement. However, he had already reached the age of 81, was half-blind and weak and incapable of exerting any appreciable influence on the government's policy. The Foreign Minister and leading spokesman of the government was Alphonse Lamartine, famous poet and one of the finest orators of his day, who was given the task of stemming the revolutionary tide with his eloquence. Louis Blanc, representing the workers' interests, was also elected to the provisional government. He was to head the Commission du Luxembourg to enquire into social reforms at the magnificent Palais de Luxembourg, which was not however allocated any funds or concrete rights.

On seeing that "their" hero Louis Blanc had been made a Minister in the provisional government, the workers had confidence in the new government and instead of pressing their former demands patiently waited for Louis Blanc to come to terms with his colleagues and achieve results that would alleviate their plight. However, the real power in the government was in the

hands of calculating representatives of the bourgeoisie, who on recovering from their initial panic at once began to embark on a counter-offensive against the proletariat, masking their true intentions by conceding prominence in the public eye to popular figures such as Dupont de l'Éure, Lamartine and Louis Blanc, of whom they were only too glad to make use in order to promote their own ends.

The main concern of the bourgeoisie and its political champions, although cleverly disguised, was to get the working class to submit and to deprive it of its newly acquired power. The problem was how to keep the proletariat at bay in the conditions of a democratic revolution. The bourgeois politicians realised that the best way was to isolate the proletariat from its potential allies.

The revolution had inherited from the July Monarchy an empty treasury and large debts. After the revolution, the powerful financiers refused to co-operate with the government to enable it to solve its difficulties. A solution to this financial crisis was quite simple, if only those who profited from state loans—the bankers and wealthy industrialists—were obliged to contribute towards their privileges. However, the provisional government in compliance with the wishes of the bourgeoisie chose a different path and introduced the 45 centime tax. This meant a tax increase of 45 centimes in the franc. The main burden of the new taxation was borne by the peasantry and the urban petty bourgeoisie. Instead of the improvements for which these two social groups had been hoping, the revolution merely brought them increased taxation and still more difficult material conditions.

The bourgeois politicians in the state apparatus and the bourgeois press presented this increased taxation to the people as a measure made necessary by the growing demands of the proletariat. In Paris in view of the large number of unemployed, so-called national workshops were set up, where for two francs a day workers were employed as navvies and so on. The bourgeois politicians insinuated that enormous expenses were being incurred in connection with these workshops and the sessions of the Commission du Luxembourg, and that it was thus because of the workers that tax increases had had to be introduced. Such were the methods employed by the bourgeoisie to embitter the peasantry and the urban petty bourgeoisie against the proletariat.

The true champions of the French proletariat such as Louis Auguste Blanqui (1805-1881), a staunch revolutionary who was a violent critic of all bourgeois regimes, protested against this policy of provocation pursued by the Provisional Government. However Blanqui was powerless to do anything, for the majority of the workers still meekly followed Louis Blanc who was a member of the Provisional Government and consequently, in his

defence of all that government's policies, was able to present them in a more acceptable light to the working class on the strength of the authority he still enjoyed among them.

What was more, on March 17th, when revolutionary clubs organised a demonstration in Paris in protest against the new policies of the Provisional Government, Louis Blanc came out onto the balcony of the Hôtel de Ville and appealed to the workers to have confidence in the Provisional Government. His tremendous influence among the proletariat was sufficient to ensure the peaceful dispersal of the demonstration.

The June Uprising

Thus the bourgeoisie, making skilful use of Louis Blanc's popularity to further their own ends, succeeded in creating a rift between the proletariat and the peasantry. This was to influence the outcome of the elections to the Constituent Assembly held in April 1848, the first since the time of the First Republic to be organised on a basis of universal suffrage. The candidates put up by the proletariat suffered a crushing defeat. The peasants, who constituted the majority of the voters, voted for the protégés of the bourgeoisie. Now that their position in the country had been effectively consolidated, the bourgeois politicians decided that the time had come to strike the decisive blow at the proletariat.

On May 4th, the first session of the Constituent Assembly was opened. The Provisional Government was to be replaced by an executive committee that was bourgeois through and through. Dupont de l'Éure, Lamartine and Louis Blanc had outlived their usefulness to the bourgeoisie and they were quietly left on the shelf. The bourgeoisie then indulged in a whole series of manoeuvres designed to further weaken the proletariat's position, setting the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie against the workers.

On May 15th, a group of Paris workers attempted to disband the reactionary Constituent Assembly, but their efforts came to nought. As a result of this attempt, the revolutionary clubs were closed down and Blanqui was arrested.

On June 21st, the government issued a decree ordering the national workshops to be closed down and thousands of workers came out into the streets in protest. The government had known full well that the workers would not accept such a decree lying down, and indeed they were counting on a new uprising in a situation in which the odds would be against the workers.

As was to be foreseen, the working class took up the challenge. Karl Marx, a contemporary of these revolutionary events, was to comment: "The workers were left no choice; they had to starve



Street fighting in the Paris suburb of St. Antoine during the June uprising.
Engraving

or let fly. They answered on June 22nd with the tremendous insurrection in which the first great battle was fought between the two classes that split modern society. It was a fight for the preservation or annihilation of the *bourgeois* order."

The whole of the Paris proletariat manned the barricades together with their brothers from the national workshops. The workers put up a heroic struggle, ready to sacrifice their lives for the cause. They revealed remarkable aptitude and initiative in their instinctive approach to military problems which seldom led them astray. Women and children helped their husbands, brothers and fathers, fearless in the face of a rain of bullets. The courage and determination of the insurgent proletariat stunned the world.

Yet the odds were against them. All property-owning interests in the country were concentrated against the workers. The big bourgeoisie launched a furious attack against their numerically weak class enemy, and they were aided by the peasants and the urban petty bourgeoisie, misled as they were by bourgeois politicians; these natural allies of the workers struck out with ferocious zeal against what was really their own cause as well.

General Cavaignac, who had earned the confidence of the bourgeoisie after his ruthless treatment of the Algerians in their struggle against the French conquerors was invested with extraordinary powers; the exterminator of the colonial peoples was equally ruthless towards the working class. The boundless cruelty with which Cavaignac suppressed the revolt was to arouse the indignation of all progressive people of the times. "Slaughter was the order of those terrible days," wrote Alexander Herzen. "Any individual whose hands were not stained with proletarian blood was suspicious in the eyes of the philistines."

The bodies of five hundred workers lay in the streets of Paris after Cavaignac's butchers had razed the last barricades to the ground with cannon fire. The bourgeoisie were to unleash all their fury only after the revolt had been crushed: eleven thousand workers—twenty-two times more than those killed in the actual fighting—were shot once the wealthy had asserted their rule once more.

Louis Bonaparte Becomes President

The working class was the most loyal defender of democracy and social progress and its defeat in the June uprising of 1848 paved the way for a new wave of reaction.

This soon became evident during the elections to the presidency of the Republic which took place in December 1848. One

of the many candidates was Prince Louis Napoleon Bonaparte. This nephew of Napoleon I was an unprincipled hedonist engaged in the pursuit of thrills and melodrama in whatever milieu he might happen to find himself, both in the ranks of the secret revolutionary organisations in Italy, through his participation in impractical attempts to bring about political coups and subsequent imprisonment and in his vagabond life among the London rabble. When he came to France after the revolution full of ambitious plans and thirsting for riches, he decided to stake everything on his celebrated name and all that was associated with it. No one in the country knew anything about this political careerist or took him seriously. However, to the amazement of all his contemporaries it was this political nonentity, "the little nephew of the great uncle", who attracted the most votes.

Louis Bonaparte was elected to rule over bourgeois France. He or rather his great name associated with military victories and firm imperial rule attracted the votes of the big bourgeoisie, the more prosperous sections of the peasantry and even the petty bourgeoisie of the towns which proved highly susceptible to blatant chauvinistic propaganda.

The Coup d'État of December 2, 1851

The very election of Louis Bonaparte to the presidency of the Second Republic spelled the republic's downfall. Louis Bonaparte made the most of every opportunity available to him as head of state to do away with the republic. On December 2, 1851 with the help of the army he seized absolute power. In Paris and in the provinces small groups of republicans attempted to put up some sort of resistance but such moves were soon crushed. The main defender of democracy, the proletariat, was in no state to take up arms after the June massacre and there was no one left to save the republic. It was formally done away with a year later, in December 1852. A monarchist regime was established once more in France—Louis Napoleon declaring himself Emperor of the Second Empire, Napoleon III.

Thus the Second Republic, which had been greeted with such enthusiasm and had met with what had seemed such unanimous support in February 1848, was destined to come to an end a mere four years later and be replaced by a reactionary and militant Bonapartist Empire.

Unlike the revolution of 1789 which had advanced from strength to strength, that of 1848 from the very outset had seemed destined to collapse, because the French bourgeoisie, which had come to hate and fear the working class, already represented by

that time a counter-revolutionary force. The proletariat, although it had displayed its strength and determination in the June uprising, was still lacking the necessary political experience to unite and lead forward in its wake the majority of the working people.

The Revolution in Germany

In Germany revolution also broke out in the spring of 1848. This was Germany's first revolution and many of those problems which had been resolved in France at the end of the eighteenth century were now confronted by the Germans for the first time.

The most vital task was the unification of the country and the establishment of a German nation state. While England and France had long since been united nation states, Germany was still little more than an abstract concept. There were thirty-eight German states, large and small, all with their own monarchs, all carrying on constant feuds with one another. Among the most powerful were Prussia, Bavaria, Saxony, Württemberg and Hesse. In all these states—both the large ones and the pocket-handkerchief ones—the rulers and nobles clung desperately to their mediaeval privileges, while feudal practices, hidebound tradition and iron discipline were the order of the day. Administrative and economic disunity created serious obstacles in the path of Germany's economic development. Although machines had already been introduced and the first railways had been built, Germany still lagged far behind France and England in the sphere of economic development. The lack of a united central power was the most obvious pointer to the vestiges of feudalism which still played such an important role in German life. The campaign against feudal rule—the uprooting and abolition of all feudal practices in particular in agriculture where they served to hold back the advance of a peasantry numbering many million—was the second vital task before the German revolution, and was inextricably tied up with the first.

German literature of the 1830s and '40s, and in particular the works of the great German poet Heinrich Heine (1797-1856) and the group of progressive poets, novelists and playwrights known as "Junges Deutschland" (Young Germany) boldly exposed and ridiculed the hideous and repellent traits of the pompous and reactionary monarchies of the petty states and narrow-minded Prussian arrogance. Their bold political poetry played an important part in stirring the social conscience of their fellow countrymen.

Revolutionary outbreaks were to occur first of all in the western states. In Baden, Württemberg, Bavaria and Hesse-Darmstadt

street gatherings and demonstrations demanding political reform began early in March 1848. "German Unity" and "Freedom" were the main slogans of these March days. In Baden a small group of democrats called for the establishment of a republic but this demand met with little support.

This tide of revolutionary activity was so powerful that the rulers of the western states came to realise that they had no choice but to make some political concessions at once. King Wilhelm I of Württemberg hastened to decree freedom of the press, dismiss his former ministers and replace them with the leaders of the local bourgeois liberals. In Bavaria, where the popular demonstrations were on a particularly large scale, King Ludwig I decided he would do as well to abdicate in his son's favour. In Baden, after the Foreign Ministry had been burnt down in Karlsruhe, the capital, Duke Leopold immediately dismissed the most hated reactionary ministers and appointed local liberals in their place.

The political atmosphere in Prussia soon grew tense as well. Here the Berlin workers constituted the most active revolutionary force. Before the revolution even started their militancy had struck terror into the German bourgeois, who in a state of panic had jumped to the conclusion that a storm was brewing that would make the French unrest look like a tea-party. That was of course an exaggeration but this mood of alarm revealed the ambivalent contradictory position of the German bourgeoisie. The German bourgeois liberals who were deprived of political rights and held in contempt by the Prussian Junkers (the local land-owning gentry) naturally aspired to becoming the leading political force in the country. However, although they hated and feared the monarchy and the nobility, they hated and feared the workers still more. Hence the vacillations and indecisive weakness of the German bourgeoisie during this period of revolutionary ferment.

The Prussian King, Friedrich Wilhelm IV, and in particular crown-prince Wilhelm had no desire to make any concessions to the bourgeoisie. They relied on the support of their loyal troops which were slowly mustered in force to Berlin and on the help of Tsar Nicholas I of Russia, whom they asked at the beginning of March to send troops to Germany. Meanwhile Friedrich Wilhelm played for time, making various vague promises.

The Berlin Uprising of March 18-19

At last appreciating the risk involved in continuing to resist the political demands of his subjects, on the night of March 17th Friedrich Wilhelm announced that he would grant Prussia a con-

stitution and promised other liberal reforms. On the morning of March 18th large crowds of workers, craftsmen and burghers came out into the streets to celebrate their first victory. At the walls of the royal palace this peaceful demonstration was mown down by government troops and soon the streets were strewn with slain and wounded.

The news of this cruel reprisal gave rise to bitter indignation. Soon barricades were set up everywhere, manned largely by the Berlin workers. Despite hastily summoned reinforcements, the state troops were defeated in the grim street fighting that followed. A certain liberal politician remarked to the King on the evening of March 18th that the crown was about to fall from his head. The Prussian monarch was in a state of extreme confusion and felt he could no longer rely on brute force. On the morning of March 19th he issued an appeal "To My Dear Berliners". He promised to have the troops withdrawn from the capital immediately and gave orders to that effect the same day. When on the following day a public funeral was held for those who had been killed in the street fighting the King found himself obliged to pay his last respects to the victims of his own troops.

Betrayal by the Bourgeoisie

The victory secured by the people of Prussia on March 18-19 in their first encounter with the monarchy, was to prove their first and last.

The German bourgeoisie was very much on guard after the severe fright it had been given by the valorous stand of the Berlin workers. The ministers newly appointed by the King and led by the banker Camphausen and the industrialist Hanseemann were concerned first and foremost with gaining the monarch's confidence. They went out of their way to come to terms with the King and the nobility in order to combine efforts to hold in check the revolutionary fervour of the workers. Similar behaviour was to be observed on the part of nearly all the German bourgeoisie, which feared the people and betrayed its interests. The landless and poor peasantry, which had hoped to be released from cruel feudal oppression by the revolution and granted land gratis also had its illusions shattered. The National Assembly of Prussia which opened in May 1848 in Berlin rejected these just demands put forward by the peasants. The bourgeoisie thus betrayed not only the workers but the peasants as well. Before long the bourgeois leaders turned to the King with the request that troops be brought back to the capital, a request which he willingly granted.

The Work of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels in 1848

The German proletariat was too weak, inexperienced and poorly organised to put up a successful resistance to the combined forces of the monarchy, the nobility and the bourgeoisie.

The great founders of scientific communism, Marx and Engels, hastened back to their native Germany as soon as the revolution began there. Neither of these two champions of the proletariat were drawing-room revolutionaries who took refuge in peaceful isolation from the stormy torrents of political developments, but were always to be found in the forefront of revolutionary activity. In Germany they made their headquarters in Cologne, an important industrial centre.

They were now faced with the question as to how best to reach a wide audience and organise progressive revolutionary forces. In Cologne Marx started to put out a newspaper, *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, which was to prove an effective militant organ of revolutionary democracy. Marx and Engels drew up a clear programme of action for the German people, calling for the overthrow of all feudal German governments, the abolition of feudal society throughout German lands and the establishment of a united democratic German Republic. This programme was the vital prerequisite for the next stage in the struggle, the fight for socialism. This coherent, militant and far-sighted programme drawn up by Marx and Engels in the pages of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* was to attract many supporters. Yet at that particular stage in the history of the German workers' movement such a newspaper was unable to rally together all the progressive forces of the country. In addition, the paper's life was to be limited to less than a year. The last issue appeared in May 1849, when the counter-revolutionary forces had already regained the upper hand. Engels was later to recall: "We had to surrender our fortress, but we withdrew with our arms and baggage, with band playing and flag flying, the flag of the last issue, a red issue."

The Tide of Counter-Revolution

As early as May 1848 an all-German Constituent Assembly was convened in Frankfurt-on-Main to discuss the issue of German unification. Many democrats placed great hopes in this Assembly since its members were elected by universal suffrage and it might well have become an authoritative platform for the interests of the German people. The majority of the deputies to the Frankfurt Parliament were bourgeois liberals, professors and lawyers.



FREDERICK ENGELS, 1872

They delivered long speeches on abstract themes vying with one another in oratorical skill, but proved ill-prepared for political action and the solution of practical problems. After the June uprising of the Paris proletariat the Frankfurt deputies, like the German bourgeoisie as a whole, were carried away by a wave of fear and hatred of the working class and veered sharply to the right. Closing their eyes to the tide of counter-revolution which was building up throughout the country, they continued to deliver lengthy ineffective speeches and elaborate the "fundamentals" of the all-German constitution.

Meanwhile the counter-revolutionary forces in Prussia led by the Junkers had embarked on a new offensive. By now convinced of the utter incompetence of the bourgeois politicians where real action was concerned, the Prussian King issued a decree on November 9, 1848, giving instructions for the transfer of the Constituent Assembly from Berlin to a small provincial town, Brandenburg-on-the-Havel, dismissing all the ministers and replacing them with his own supporters. This amounted to a virtual disbandment of the Assembly and in December its dissolution was officially ratified.

The orators of the "Frankfurt talking-shop" who "failed" to notice what had taken place, continued to churn out interminable speeches. The decision they finally reached was to offer the crown of the German Emperor to the most reactionary of all German rulers, Friedrich Wilhelm of the house of Hohenzollern. However, Friedrich Wilhelm did not deign to accept this crown "from out of the dirt". What was more, the Prussian King refused to recognise the constitution drawn up by the Frankfurt Parliament, and the other German monarchs were quick to follow suit. The revolutionary democrats in Dresden and the western states organised a popular uprising in May 1849. Engels was also to take part in this armed uprising, fighting shoulder to shoulder with the people in their struggle for their freedom. Despite the valiant resistance put up by the insurgents, the movement as a whole was too weak and unorganised, so that defeat was inevitable in face of the vast numerical superiority of the enemy. The intervention of Prussian troops in the Palatinate and Baden made defeat even more rapid, and also meant that the fate of the Frankfurt Parliament was sealed in advance. Its fruitless debate and compilation of protests to which no one paid the slightest attention continued until June 1849 when it was quite simply disbanded once and for all. This event signified the final triumph of counter-revolution in Germany.

Revolution and Counter-Revolution in the Austrian Empire

In the multinational Austrian Empire the question of revolution was complicated by a number of additional issues which did not apply to the French and German situations. In this empire revolutionaries were faced not merely with the task of overthrowing the feudal absolutist order but also with freeing various enslaved peoples from national oppression. Hungarians, Czechs, Slovaks, Rumanians, Ukrainians, Poles, Croats and Serbs were all under the Hapsburg yoke. All these peoples aspired to national independence and freedom. As soon as a popular uprising broke out in Vienna on March 13, 1848, and the hated despot Metternich fled the country, all the subject peoples of the Empire were caught up in violent waves of revolutionary activity. On March 15th a revolution broke out in Hungary. The Hungarian revolutionary democrats possessed extremely gifted leaders in Sándor Petöfi (1823-1849) and Mihály Táncsics (1799-1884). Revolutionary outbreaks in Prague and other Czech towns, Transcarpathia in the Ukraine, Croatia and the other southern Slav states occurred almost simultaneously.

The revolution in the Austrian Empire was far from being a homogeneous process; it consisted rather of a number of revolutions: Austrian, Czech, Hungarian, etc. The tragedy of this revolt against Hapsburg rule was its lack of unity. Not only did the individual peoples fail to join forces in the struggle against the common enemy but they even stood in the way of each other's success. In this situation the bourgeoisie and the liberal sections of the nobility were to prove once again cowardly and indecisive: instead of seeking the support of the masses—the workers and peasants—they chose to ignore their just demands and seek a compromise with the Hapsburgs and the Austrian nobility.

The Hungarian Revolution and Its Defeat

On June 12-17, 1848 the army of Field Marshal Prince Windischgrätz suppressed a heroic popular uprising in Prague. At the end of October and the beginning of November the troops of this hated commander put down a democratic revolt in Vienna with unprecedented cruelty. Hungary was to hold out longest of all. On April 14, 1849, the Hungarian Diet declared itself independent of Hapsburg rule. Under the leadership of the talented patriot Lajos Kossuth independent Hungary started to wage a revolutionary war against its former oppressors. The Austrian Emperor, Franz Joseph, fearing that he would be unable to put

down the Hungarian revolution on his own, turned to the Russian Tsar Nicholas I for help. The intervention of the tsarist troops in Hungary made possible the rapid defeat of the Hungarian revolution. Russian revolutionary democrats such as Alexander Herzen and Nikolai Chernyshevsky voiced indignant protests at the Tsar's action, but were quite powerless to change the situation. In August 1849 the Hungarian revolution was finally defeated.

Revolutionary outbreaks in Italy and movements in other European states such as Belgium, Spain and Switzerland were crushed still earlier.

The triumph of counter-revolution was complete throughout the whole of Europe. Yet although the revolutions of 1848 ended in defeat, they were to exert a major influence on the subsequent course of European history. They are significant not only because of the various concessions gained, such as the abolition of serfdom and a certain reduction of national oppression in the Austrian Empire and the introduction of some bourgeois liberal reforms in Germany. These revolutions gave the European proletariat invaluable experience in political struggle. These revolutions, which did not achieve the aims they set out with, demonstrated that the bourgeoisie, now that the proletariat had come into being as a large and influential social class, had ceased to be a revolutionary class and instead had come to represent a counter-revolutionary force. They also demonstrated that liberation from feudal exploitation and democratic freedoms were something that the people could attain only on its own under the leadership of the working class and that therefore an alliance of the working class and the peasantry and other sections of the working people was a vital prerequisite for this goal. The experience of the revolutions of 1848-1849 and the wave of counter-revolutionary reaction which followed them also showed that national strife was fatal for the revolutionary movement and unity and solidarity of the peoples of different nationalities were an essential condition for success in the struggle against the common enemy.

Chapter Ten

RUSSIA IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY (1800-1860)

The Growth of Capitalism. Crisis of the Feudal Economy Based on Serfdom

At the beginning of the nineteenth century those forces which were eventually to lead to the final disintegration of feudal social patterns and serfdom in Russia began to crystallise. This gradual process, together with the development of early capitalism, had started some time before, but it was only now that the old order had come to appear blatantly obsolete and an obstacle to the country's progress. Russian industry by this time was developing steadily, more and more new factories were springing up and wage labour was necessary to staff them. The peasants meanwhile were still bound to the land, they were considered the property of their landowners, and this state of affairs held back the growth of a working class, so vital for the emergent industry. Trade was developing apace and the internal market grew, while the vast majority of the working masses was in bondage and unable to engage freely in trade, which meant that yet another sphere of economic development was hindered by serfdom. A new class was taking shape, the bourgeoisie, but its growth was also held back by the social patterns and codes of feudal society: there even arose ridiculous situations in which wealthy serf merchants or factory owners were handling enormous capital and hiring hundreds of workers but were officially still registered as serfs belonging to some landowner who had the right to sell them or take away their wealth as well, since all their possessions were officially the property of the landowner. The emergence of capitalist relations in agriculture by this time called for free peasants in possession of their own holdings. Spontaneous serf uprisings took place more and more frequently. These outbreaks multiplied with particular intensity after the Patriotic War of 1812. After the victory over Napoleon, the peasants protested, "We freed our motherland from the tyrant, but are now being tyrann-

nised by our own masters." "The struggle between peoples and emperors" which had gripped Western Europe now spread to Russia. A particularly widespread peasant revolt broke out in the Don area in 1818-1820. There was also unrest and discontent in the tsarist army.

The leading statesman of the Empire after the war of 1812 was the short-sighted and rough-mannered petty tyrant Arakcheyev, the intimate friend of Alexander I, who came to be known as the "oppressor of all Russia". The practice of flogging was given rein in the army after Arakcheyev gave orders for the soldiers' freedom-loving spirit to be beaten out of them. Martial law was introduced in many villages near Novgorod and Kharkov: peasants were forced to carry out their agricultural work and military duties at one and the same time; work on the fields had to be done in uniform and in the form of a strict drill, and the slightest insubordination was punished by flogging. Even peasants' wives were subject to punishment if they did not stoke their stoves at the proper time or if they lit tapers late at night. Peasants were deprived of some of their land and not allowed to sell their produce. Villages subjected to such discipline were referred to as "military settlements". Feudal reaction still ruled the day in Russia.

The First Secret Societies

It was against such a background that the first secret revolutionary societies came into being in Russia. The first Russian revolutionaries are known as the Decembrists, since their first revolt took place in December (1825). The Decembrists were for the most part young officers from the gentry who had taken part in the war against Napoleon, which had awakened their political conscience. Although they themselves came from the landed gentry, their consciences and sense of honour forbade them to uphold serfdom which they regarded as the greatest evil in their country. They realised that Russia's most important task was to abolish serfdom and do away with the autocracy. The Decembrists were ardent patriots and dreamt of a new order; with the support of sympathetic troops they planned to organise an armed uprising, overthrow the autocracy, abolish serfdom and together with all strata of the population adopt a revolutionary constitution which would usher in a new society. Drafts for this revolutionary constitution were drawn up in the Northern Society led by Nikita Muravyov and in the Southern Society led by Pavel Pestel.

If adopted, these draft constitutions would have represented a tremendous advance: they would have dealt an overwhelming

blow at the nobility's hold on the country, at serfdom and the autocracy and have made possible rapid capitalist development in Russia.

Membership of the secret society was growing steadily, and came to include many famous, principled members of the Russian gentry. After joining the society, the poet Kondraty Ryleyev together with another poet member, Alexander Bestuzhev, wrote inspired revolutionary songs for the people. Ryleyev's sympathies were markedly republican.

It was in the name of the revolutionary transformation of their motherland that these revolutionaries rose to arms in December 1825 in the first revolutionary uprising against tsarist rule. The Decembrists were later to be known as the "first champions of freedom".

In November 1825 Tsar Alexander I died suddenly and a tense atmosphere developed during the ensuing interregnum. The Tsar had had no children and was to be succeeded by his brother Constantine. Constantine however had secretly renounced his right to the throne, which meant that the next Tsar would be the insensitive despot, his brother Nicholas, who was highly unpopular in the army. Since Constantine's decision had not been made public sufficiently long in advance, the troops and the population swore an oath of allegiance to Constantine and then almost immediately afterwards were required to swear another to Nicholas. Unrest among the people and in the army had been rife for some time and after the two different oaths of allegiance had been taken the situation became still more tense.

On the day set aside for the oath of allegiance to Nicholas I—December 14th—the members of the secret society decided to organise a revolt in their regiments and lead the insurgent troops out onto Senate Square, so as to obstruct the Senate from taking the oath of allegiance to the new Tsar. They prepared a revolutionary manifesto to the Russian people, which proclaimed the abolition of serfdom and the dissolution of the existing government. The manifesto also called for the convening of a constituent assembly in order to decide whether Russia should become a republic or a limited constitutional monarchy and then to adopt a constitution and elect a new government. This document also declared to the Russian people that freedom of speech and of the press and religious liberty would be introduced and the terms of military service reduced. Another armed uprising in the south was planned to coincide with the revolt in St. Petersburg but never materialised.

About three thousand insurgent troops came out onto Senate Square led by the Decembrist officers. An enormous crowd gathered that was sympathetic to this revolutionary protest. However

the Decembrists hesitated to rely on the support of the popular masses. They were unable to proclaim their manifesto and the revolt did not proceed according to plan. The evening before, the Decembrists had elected a dictator from among their ranks—a long-standing member of the society, Prince Troubetskoy. However, he did not appear on the square, thus leaving his comrades in the lurch and betraying the common cause. After waiting in vain for a long time the Decembrists at last chose another leader, Prince Obolensky.

By this time it was already too late. Nicholas I had seized the initiative and by dusk the new Tsar had given orders for his loyal troops to open fire on the crowd, and the revolt was soon crushed.

This abortive uprising of the Decembrists marked a turning point in Russian history. With it the revolutionary struggle can be said to have begun. Subsequent generations of brave Russian revolutionaries were to receive the revolutionary baton and continue the struggle against serfdom and the autocracy.

The Crisis of Serfdom

By the middle of the nineteenth century the crisis within Russian feudal society was more apparent than ever. The contradictions between the developing capitalist social relations and the obsolete feudal society were growing sharper and sharper. From the 1830s onwards small-scale manufactories were giving way to factories, and machines were gradually ousting manual labour in industry. The introduction of machinery demanded an adequate supply of wage workers more qualified than the illiterate peasants. With the development of capitalism a new class came into being—the proletariat. In 1837 the country's first railway was opened between St. Petersburg and Tsarskoe Selo and by 1851 the main line between St. Petersburg and Moscow was open. The country needed to increase agricultural output to supply the growing towns and in this respect once more primitive serf agriculture held back economic development. Mechanisation of agriculture made negligible headway at this period since it was to the landowners' advantage to use cheap manual labour rather than introduce agricultural machinery.

Popular Revolt Against the Feudal Order. A New Generation of Revolutionaries

At the beginning of 1830 a wave of "cholera riots" swept Russia. A rumour spread that a serious outbreak of cholera had been caused by the tsarist officials and landowners deliberately putting

poison into the wells. The real motive behind these riots was the hatred of serfdom. Some of the insurgent peasants gave the following clear definition of the reason behind the popular discontent: "Fools pay heed to poison and cholera, what we need is to rid ourselves of the race of swine, the gentry." Later, large-scale peasant uprisings were to spread through the Ukraine, particularly in the 1850s. The tsarist authorities caught the leader of the peasant movement Ustim Karmelyuk time and time again but he kept on outwitting his captors and escaping to lead the peasants forward in revolt once more. Often the authorities had to send in the army to quell these peasant uprisings and sometimes even use artillery. However, these outbreaks of rebellion were lacking in cohesion and clear objectives and therefore did not prove sufficiently powerful to put an end to serfdom.

Far from dying out after the Decembrist uprising, the Russian revolutionary movement soon gathered new strength and important new figures came to the fore—revolutionary democrats championing the interests of the people, the millions of oppressed and impoverished peasants. Ardent champions of the people of this period included Alexander Herzen (1812-1870), Nikolai Ogarev (1813-1877) and their friend Vissarion Belinsky (1811-1848). They were all bitterly opposed to serfdom and the autocracy and ready to fight to defend their ideals. Unlike previous revolutionaries, they sought their main source of support among the popular masses. A particularly important role in the propagation of these new ideas was played by Belinsky, fiery spokesman of the people, the hero of the progressive generation and the forerunner of the *raznochintsi* (revolutionaries from the radical middle class).

Herzen, Ogarev and Belinsky not only campaigned for the abolition of serfdom and the overthrow of the autocracy, but as socialists they dreamed of the time when the exploitation of man by man would be no more and the society that bred such exploitation would be a thing of the past. As yet they were unaware of the scientific methods to be employed to accomplish these ends, and thus remained Utopian socialists.

Frequent arrest and exile made it impossible for Herzen to continue his propaganda work effectively in Russia, and he emigrated to Western Europe where he continued his struggle against tsarism; here he was soon joined by his friend Ogarev. Herzen founded the first free Russian press outside the Empire's borders, which boldly attacked serfdom and the autocracy, exposed their inherent evils and rallied the people to the struggle against the decaying social order which fettered Russia in backwardness and illiteracy.

Cultural Achievements in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century

Despite the heavy yoke of serfdom and the exploitation to which the peasants were subjected by their masters, a remarkable progressive culture flourished against this background of struggle against social injustice. Campaigning against this injustice and oppression many Russian writers, musicians and artists were to produce works of outstanding merit, and popular art traditions also flourished.

Vivid pictures of Russian life are immortalised in the superb works of universally acclaimed poets such as Pushkin and Lermontov, in the stories of Gogol and the novels of Turgenev. Subjects such as the obsolescence of serfdom, the outdated social order and the search for truth and social justice were to be found alongside rich psychological portraiture in Pushkin's *Yevgeny Onegin*, Lermontov's *A Hero of Our Time*, Gogol's *Dead Souls* and Turgenev's *A Sportsman's Sketches*. The literature of these years evoked a lively response among readers to whom it brought heightened social awareness and presented a rallying call to the fight for social justice.

Russian music also came into its own in this period in the work of the great composer Mikhail Glinka. A bitter attack against serfdom was to be found in the talented paintings of Pavel Fedotov ("The Major's Courtship", "Fidelka's Death", etc.). In his enormous canvas "Christ Before the People", Alexander Ivanov depicted common people in vivid realistic terms in the foreground.

Important advances were also made in the sphere of science. Nikolai Lobachevsky founded a system of non-Euclidean geometry which was to become an important landmark in the history of mathematics. The outstanding chemist Nikolai Zinin was the first scientist to synthesise aniline dyes and this achievement laid the foundations for a whole new branch of industry. Nikolai Pirogov who carried out important experiments in antiseptics and anaesthesia was one of the founders of field surgery.

Russian culture of this period is permeated with humanism and love and respect for all members of the human race and contains a bold summons to the struggle against all that was obsolete and held back social progress, in the name of a new, just order.

The Crimean War—1853-1856

The inherent contradictions of Russian society became all the more acute when war which had long been brewing between Rus-

sia on the one hand and Britain and France on the other finally broke out in 1853.

The Tsar and his government, feeling themselves by this time to be in a far from strong position, decided to make use of the weakness of the Turkish Empire to consolidate their control over the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles and ensure free passage for Russian vessels from the Black Sea into the Mediterranean. This would have brought landowning interests increased revenues, promoted the agricultural development of the southern provinces and, it was hoped, postponed the ultimate collapse of serfdom. However, stronger and more progressive capitalist states such as Britain and France were not prepared to sit back and watch Russia strengthen its hold on the Middle East; they were also not averse to the prospect of capturing such rich prizes as the Crimea and the Caucasus. The course of the war was to show up Russia's backwardness when it came to both land and naval engagements. Russia's navy consisted of sailing vessels while the British and French navies had long since gone over to steam; their arms and artillery were also superior to those of the Russian army. Poor communications meant that the Russian forces were virtually cut off from their supply centres—supplies of both arms and food were seriously inadequate and subject to frequent delay.

Despite all these difficulties the enemy were astounded by the heroism of the Russian soldiers and the talent of the commanders. The Russian fleet scored a resounding victory at the battle of Sinop under Admiral Nakhimov at the very beginning of the war. After unsuccessful attempts on the part of the allies to seize the approaches to St. Petersburg, Kronstadt, the Baltic coast and Kamchatka they concentrated all their forces on the Crimean peninsula. The allies advanced towards Sevastopol but their attempt to take the port by storm ended in failure and they settled down to a siege which was to last 349 days. The Russian troops were commanded by Admirals Nakhimov, Kornilov and Istomin. After almost a year of siege during which the defenders suffered heavy casualties, the city fell. It was only in the Caucasus that Russian troops under the command of Nikolai Muravyov, a friend of the Decembrists, gained victories of any consequence, which enabled the Russians to secure their hold over the Crimea and the Caucasus. The war ended with the drafting of the Treaty of Paris in 1856, the terms of which were extremely burdensome for Russia, since she was deprived of the right to have warships in the Black Sea and was also obliged to raze to the ground all her coastal fortifications in that area.

The Emergence of a Revolutionary Situation. The Abolition of Serfdom

The Crimean War exposed to the world the weakness and atrophy of Russia's feudal society. The brunt of the hardship resulting from the negative outcome of this war was borne by the common people, since it took a heavy toll of lives and brought widespread poverty in its wake. Driven to desperation by hardship and want the masses responded to all activity undertaken by the "powers that be" with violent resistance. The ruling classes were unable to preserve the old status quo any longer, now that the people openly refused to go on living under the former system. The masters found it impossible to maintain their control over their serfs relying on the methods they had employed in the past. By this time there existed that combination of objective portents of change, which Lenin was to term a **revolutionary situation**.

Marx and Lenin both stressed in their writings that revolutions do not take place before revolutionary situations develop, although not every revolutionary situation breeds a revolution. The main reason why no revolution actually took place in the years 1859-1861 was the incapacity of the insurgent peasants to combine their efforts on a mass scale, which was the vital step required in order to overthrow or at least limit the Tsar's powers. The government sensed this and agreed to timely concessions. The government bolstered its power by a number of reforms.

The most important of these reforms wrested from the government by the mass uprisings and revolutionary opposition currents was the Abolition of Serfdom in 1861. The path to this important reform had been paved long since by the whole course of the country's economic advance and the threatening collapse of feudal social patterns.

On February 19, 1861, Tsar Alexander II (1855-1881) signed a new law liberating the serfs and a manifesto addressed to the people which proclaimed that serfdom had been abolished. The reform was introduced in such a way as to conform as far as possible with the interests of the landowners, while the peasants were convinced that all the land would be handed over to them free of charge. In practice however their emancipation from feudal bondage proved purely formal and they were merely granted small holdings for large redemption payments, which exceeded the prices for which they would have been able to buy plots of a similar size through normal channels. The land the peasants received proved utterly inadequate for their needs and of such poor quality that they were often obliged almost immediately to reenter their former masters' service, where their remuneration

was a miserable pittance. The money they earned in this way found its way back to their masters' pockets either in the form of rent for the plots the landowners hired out to them or in the form of repayment for loans they had granted the peasants.

Peasant Protest. Activity of the Russian Revolutionaries

Peasant protest had never before broken out on such a wide scale as in the year when serfdom was abolished. The peasants responded to their "emancipation" with revolts. In the course of a mere twelve months there were over a thousand such outbreaks; troops were called out to counter a large number of them and in some cases even artillery was used. Among the most serious of these uprisings were the one that took place in the village of Bezdna led by the peasant Anton Petrov, and another in the village of Kandeyevka, where peasants bearing aloft a red banner marched out to face the tsarist troops.

Long before the reform of 1861 revolutionary democrats had started to carry on wide-scale propaganda against the tsarist regime and serfdom. An important role in this campaign was played by the revolutionary newspaper *Kolokol* (The Bell) which Herzen and Ogarev published abroad and the journal *Sovremennik* (The Contemporary) edited by some of the leading revolutionary democrats of the period, Nikolai Chernyshevsky (1828-1889), Nikolai Dobrolyubov (1836-1861) and the revolutionary poet Nikolai Nekrasov (1821-1877). This journal, despite the ruthless hand of the censor, carried on a fearless campaign in the name of the peasant revolution. The editorial offices of *Sovremennik* became the rallying centre of the Russian revolutionaries, while *Kolokol* became the headquarters of the Russian revolutionaries living in exile. Both centres were in close contact and collaborated with each other.

The Russian revolutionaries went about setting up a new revolutionary organisation, a goal they had aspired to even before the reform. In 1861 a large secret organisation *Zemlya i Volya* (Land and Freedom) had grown up; it took its lead from Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubov and also recognised Herzen and Ogarev as leaders of the political exiles.

Zemlya i Volya was a federation of various revolutionary circles and numbered hundreds of members with branches scattered all over Russia. Its main aim was to organise a nation-wide peasant uprising, the outbreak of which the revolutionaries had expected as soon as the reform of 1861 had been introduced. However, this uprising did not take place as they had hoped, for the

peasant uprisings were too scattered while the revolutionaries were divided as both to means and ends. The members of *Zemlya i Volya* pinned their hopes on 1863, but this year also failed to bring forth the united peasants' revolt they were waiting for, although wide-scale uprisings broke out in Poland, Lithuania and Byelorussia. Meanwhile the society was to suffer a severe setback when Dobrolyubov died and Chernyshevsky, Serno-Solov'yevich and many other of its leaders were arrested. The series of savage reprisals served to weaken and undermine the peasant movement and in 1864 *Zemlya i Volya*—the largest revolutionary organisation since the Decembrist revolt—disbanded on its own accord, forestalling the tsarist authorities who were bent on bringing about its downfall and doing away with hundreds of active revolutionaries. However, economic progress and the pressure of the peasant movement and the revolutionary struggle were so great that a further series of reforms was wrested from the tsarist government. These reforms were introduced in the period 1863-1874. Principles of self-government were introduced into rural and urban administration, although its nature was determined to a large degree by the class interests of the landowners. Elective *Zemstvo* (local, district and provincial) and urban councils were set up which were made responsible for social services in the individual provinces or districts (such issues as local communications, food supplies, mutual assurance, social charities, supervision of local trade and industry, etc.). However, it was still the gentry who had the decisive say in the work of the *Zemstvo* establishments. Self-government for cities was devised on similar principles when town dumas (councils) were introduced. The legal reform of 1864—the most consistent of the bourgeois reforms of this period—introduced trial by jury with counsels for the defence and the prosecution. However, side by side with these new courts there still existed the former ones, and the legal reforms did not anyway apply to all provinces of the Empire. Corporal punishment was also abolished and censorship and educational reforms were introduced.

Thus Russia's outdated feudal social order and serfdom, one of this order's main pillars, were at last replaced by capitalist structures which at that period were progressive and enabled the country to advance rapidly.

Chapter Eleven

POPULAR REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENTS IN ASIA

New Methods in Colonial Policy

By the second half of the nineteenth century the consequences of the industrial revolution in England and industrial development in the other countries of Europe and in North America started to make themselves felt in Asia and Africa.

The straightforward plunder of the period of primitive accumulation gave way to the exploitation of the colonial and dependent countries as markets for manufactures and sources of raw materials, the need for which was being felt more and more acutely by the capitalist countries for their developing industry. By this time the whole world was caught up in the tentacles of capitalism as the world market gradually started to take shape.

The colonial powers strove to consolidate and extend their direct control over the colonial territories they had conquered. Such control was established and new territories seized amid fierce economic and military conflict.

In those countries which were already colonial possessions of the European powers, the foreign rulers possessed a monopoly of political power which they exerted in a variety of ways. The industrial bourgeoisie of the mother countries now started to use new methods to extend its exploitation of these colonies through the colonial administration of its own creation. England, who by this time, with good reason, laid claim to being the workshop of the world and possessed the most powerful fleet among the colonial powers, was the first country to employ these new methods on a really wide scale. In her colonial possessions such as Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, where climatic conditions were especially attractive for Europeans and the local population had been almost wiped out or driven off the fertile tracts of land, wide-scale settlement was encouraged. Large cereal farms were

set up, and also sheep farms which were to supply wool to European industry. Various methods were employed to encourage agricultural labourers to emigrate to these countries as well, so that the capitalist farmers installed there would have an ample source of labour at hand.

The Enslavement of India

Through its instrument, the East India Company, which although deprived of its trade monopoly since 1813 still retained its importance as an organ of colonial administration, Britain gradually established her control over the whole of the vast sub-continent.

The small number of princedoms and those rajahs and sultans who were still independent and tried to resist the domination of the Company were subjected to military pressure. Even the most powerful among them were unable to put up effective resistance to the Company, which by that time had firmly entrenched its positions, controlled vast territories and was well equipped with modern weapons. The peoples of India did not renounce their uneven struggle against the colonialists but as yet there existed no class capable of supplying the necessary leadership and organisation.

The majority of the rajahs, nabobs and sultans contented themselves with the fact that they were permitted to pursue their feudal exploitation of the local population in their "self-governing" princedoms. On the territories administered by the British the landowning nobles were soon to become the allies and loyal supporters of the foreign rulers.

Wherever the British came across peoples who attempted to defend their independence, they resorted to force quite ruthlessly. In 1817, after unleashing a war against the Maratha princedoms the Company annexed the domain of the peshwa Baji Rao who tried to resist them and pensioned him off. British protégés were installed on the thrones of the Maratha princedoms of Gwalior and Nagpur. Other Maratha princedoms whose territories were carved off by the British turned into typical "self-governing" princedoms, recognising the sovereignty of the Company and obediently carrying out the instructions of the British Resident installed at the court of the local ruler.

In the Punjab, the Sikhs remained faithful to their freedom-loving traditions and staunchly defended their independence. The talented statesman and commander of noble descent Ranjit Singh (1780-1839) succeeded in extending his rule to other neighbouring sirdars, consolidating the central power in his domains and

setting up an effective army. He did not deprive the peasants of their right to set up Sikh peasant communes or burden them with unduly heavy taxes and in this way assured himself of wide popular support. Ranjit Singh declared himself Maharajah and succeeded in extending the borders of the Sikh state to a considerable degree (Kashmir, Multan and Peshawar were annexed). The Sikh state was virtually the last independent princedom in India. The British were not willing to tolerate this situation after they had defeated Sind and already aspired to spreading their rule not only over the Punjab but also to neighbouring Afghanistan. The main attraction of Afghanistan lay in the fact that it opened the path for further penetration into Central Asia and the consolidation of British influence in Persia.

After the death of Ranjit Singh the Company exploited the discord which arose over the dynastic succession and rivalry amongst the Sikh nobles. At the cost of two wars (1845-1846 and 1848-1849) which took a heavy toll of lives, British troops succeeded in defeating the Sikhs. The Punjab was then annexed and became yet another province of British India. Strong garrisons were set up in the area consisting mainly of British forces. Meanwhile the British did not infringe on the privileges of the *sirdars*, who came over to their side, and at first found themselves obliged to curb the exploitation of the local peasantry and come to terms with the traditional peasant communes.

Consequences of the New British Colonial Policy in India

After completing their conquest of India, to which were also annexed Assam and other northern provinces of Burma (after the war of 1824), the British bourgeoisie started to introduce new methods of colonial policy on a wide scale. Cotton, jute and tea plantations were organised employing coolie labour. The sale of British goods in India and the export of raw materials demanded improved communications and transport facilities and more ports. In the mid-nineteenth century British entrepreneurs opened the first textile factories in Calcutta and Bombay where impoverished peasants and craftsmen supplied an ample source of cheap labour. Textile factories owned by Indians also made their appearance.

The import of manufactured goods from Britain and the growth of manufacturing in India itself accelerated the impoverishment and ruin of local craftsmen. The peasant communes soon lost their former self-sufficiency as individual economic units. The drawing of peasant labour into industry and the expansion of the

local market for British goods also led to significant changes in policy with regard to land taxation.

However the gradual stratification of the peasantry and the buying up of the land were only followed by the introduction of capitalist economic patterns on an insignificant scale. The crippling semi-feudal rents which condemned the peasants to poverty and ruin making of them little more than paupers and debt slaves still remained the predominant pattern in agriculture. High taxes levied by the colonialists for land, water supply, excise duties and indirect taxation all served to make the peasants' position still worse. The discontent of the broad masses of the peasants, especially in those areas where colonial exploitation had long been practised, mounted rapidly. Opposition came not only from the peasants. It began to grow among certain sections of the nobility and various princes, now that Britain, after conquering the whole of India, regarded it as superfluous to maintain the "self-governing" princedoms, whose rulers used to demand from their peasants and craftsmen taxes in kind, amass vast wealth, and retain their magnificent palaces and harems.

During the governor-generalship of Lord Dalhousie, who devoted much of his energy to the creation of the necessary conditions for the introduction of these new types of exploitation, a number of princedoms (such as Oudh, Satara and Jhansi) were abolished as self-governing units and made British territory. The penetration of European capital in areas where feudal or semi-feudal economies still dominated meant that wide sections of the population were exposed to ruin and poverty. Recurring famines claimed millions of victims.

The Penetration of European Capital in the Middle East

By the middle of the nineteenth century increasing penetration of European capital in the as yet independent states of the East led to the impoverishment there too of local craftsmen due to the decline of independent foreign trade and a deterioration in the position of the working people. The European powers entrenched their positions in Turkey and Iran by means of one-sided treaties or "capitulations" and ensured their subjects immunity to local law along with commercial and economic privileges. Meanwhile, local chieftains and the sultans or shahs together with the upper echelons of the bureaucracy and religious orders intensified their exploitation of the working people.

The Ottoman Empire in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century

After the Ottoman Empire and Persia had lost a number of their vassal territories, and the liberation movement of the oppressed Slav peoples had become much stronger and separatist leanings were making themselves felt among the more powerful nobles and tribal chieftains, the more far-sighted among the representatives of the ruling classes came to appreciate the urgent need for various reforms. However, attempts to introduce from above reforms which were designed to ensure the consolidation of feudal monarchies and did not modify in any way the basic principles of feudal economic relations were ill-equipped to halt the growing domination of foreign powers and enable the Empire to surmount the deep-rooted crisis of the feudal economy.

After several unsuccessful attempts to introduce military and administrative reforms on the part of Selim III and the talented statesman Bairakdar Pasha of Widdin, the Ottoman Empire gradually came to lose more and more of its subject territories as a result of either annexation by European powers or the liberation struggle of the non-Turkish peoples.

The struggle of the Greeks and the Slav peoples of the Balkan peninsula was used by the major European powers to promote their own interests in the area. There was fierce rivalry for spheres of influence between Russia, Britain, France and Austria. The Western powers were united in their efforts to halt Russia's advance towards the Bosphorus and the spread of her influence among the Serbs, Bulgarians and other Slav peoples, but vied among themselves for domination in the area. Egypt was to become the arena of fierce rivalry between Britain and France.

Egypt in 1820-1840

Under the rule of Mohammed Ali, while remaining part of the Ottoman Empire, Egypt nevertheless embarked on an independent path of development. Relying on the support of the Egyptian people, who were opposed to Turkish rule, Mohammed Ali introduced a number of administrative and military reforms. He encouraged the development of industrial crops (first and foremost cotton), the building of factories and, in order to equip his army better, had munitions factories and ship-yards built. Britain and France tried to make the most of this weakening of Egypt's dependence on Turkey and the growth of ties with foreign powers in their attempts to gain control over the country.

Mohammed Ali's policy, which promoted the interests of the Egyptian landowners, who had vested interests in commodity

production, and of the emergent bourgeoisie, was nevertheless of a progressive nature in that it played an important role in Egypt's advance towards independence. Meanwhile, however, Mohammed Ali not only refused to support the liberation struggle of other oppressed peoples of the Ottoman Empire but even sent his troops to help the Turks crush the Arab liberation movement and carry out ruthless reprisals against the Greeks during the Greek War of Independence in 1824-1827. The motive inducing Mohammed Ali to pursue this policy was his hope of extending the frontiers of his own state and persuading the Turkish sultans to recognise Egypt's independence.

The defeat of Turkey in the war with Russia (1824-1829) and the liberation struggles of the Serbs and the Greeks severely weakened the Ottoman Empire. The Treaty of Adrianople bereft Turkey of territory in the Caucasus and in the Danube delta and in addition obliged her to recognise the independence of Serbia and Greece, and pay a large war indemnity.

The Ottoman army was defeated once again in the war with Mohammed Ali which began soon after the Treaty of Adrianople had been concluded. Egyptian troops occupied Syria, Palestine and Cilicia and marched into Anatolia, threatening the Sublime Porte. Russia was the only one of the great powers who agreed to come to the Sultan's aid when he turned to the European powers with a plea for assistance. France, hoping thereby to enhance her own influence, supported Mohammed Ali. Britain meanwhile, fearing that French influence would be consolidated if the Egyptian ruler succeeded in defeating the Turks, decided to check his advance by means of Austro-Hungarian interference. When the Russian fleet sailed into the Bosphorus and the Russian landing force disembarked near Istanbul, the Western powers in a state of great alarm succeeded in persuading Turkey and Egypt to sign a compromise agreement, by which Mohammed Ali recognised the Sultan's nominal rule and withdrew his troops while the Sultan for his part agreed that the western parts of Syria, Palestine and Cilicia should be administered by Egypt. The Russian troops were recalled, but by the Treaty of Unkiar-Iskelessi Russia gave Turkey a promise of military aid in the event of a renewed outbreak of hostilities and the Sultan agreed to close the Dardanelles to all foreign ships except those of Russia in the event of war.

Attempts at Reform in Turkey

The most far-sighted members of the Turkish nobility were aware of the urgency of reforms to save the tottering empire. Sultan Mahmud II did away with the feudal military system and

disbanded the janissary corps. After his death at a critical moment just as war with Mohammed Ali had broken out again following the latter's demand for recognition of his hereditary rights to all the territories he ruled, a war in which the European powers were bound to intervene, his successor Abdul-Mejid I announced the introduction of a new series of reforms. The decree of 1839 was drawn up by the minister for foreign affairs, who had received his education in Europe, Mustafa Reshid and it promised that a law would be introduced guaranteeing security of life, property and honour to all the Sultan's citizens irrespective of religion, just administration of taxes, abolition of the farming system and a reorganisation of army recruitment.

The period which opened with this decree is known in Turkish history as the period of the *tanzimat* (transformations, reforms) and lasted approximately three decades. The reforms introduced in this period were unmistakably reforms from above which did little to threaten the interests of the ruling classes. The promised security of life, property and honour and the abolition of discrimination against non-Turkish peoples were to remain on paper. Influential sections of the nobility opposed the reforms and even those who supported them saw them as little more than a means for this multinational feudal empire to consolidate its power, and had no intention of encroaching upon the actual structure of feudal society.

These limited reforms which were frequently amended and then reintroduced did nothing to check the struggle of the oppressed non-Turkish peoples or impede the further penetration by foreign powers of the country's commerce and economy.

At the Conference of London in 1840 the Western powers succeeded in making the question of passage through the Bosphorus subject to international control, thus annulling the treaty of Unkiar-Iskelessi. The intensified economic penetration by the foreign powers and their wares made the crisis of this feudal empire still more acute, since the necessary conditions for the emergence of local capitalism were not promoted in any way.

Meanwhile, the conflicts between the various European powers in their struggle for influence in the empire as a whole and various parts of it grew all the more acute. England and France had taken an active part in the Russo-Turkish War of 1853-1856, sending an expeditionary force to the Crimea. The Treaty of Paris in 1856 deprived Russia of many of her former territorial possessions and the right to keep a military fleet in the Black Sea and maintain military fortifications on its shores. The Conference of London decreed the European powers responsible for "the integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire".

However, although Turkey formally numbered among the victors of the Crimean War its dependence on its "allies"—France and Britain—which had grown during the period of the war continued to increase. The gradual weakening and decline of the empire determined its inevitable transformation into a semi-colonial appendage of the developed European powers.

Attempts at Reform in Persia

Reforms introduced by the Grand Vizier of Persia Emir Nasir al-Mulk were of a still more limited character. In Persia the section of the ruling class which was willing to carry through any reforms was even smaller than had been the case in Turkey. Here once again attempts to consolidate the central power and reorganise the administration network were conducted against a background of bitter rivalry between the European powers for controlling influence in Persia. Here the scene was dominated by rivalry between Russia and Britain.

Quite apart from the increasing penetration of foreign wares which led to disastrous consequences for the economy as a whole, and in particular for the natural economy of the country's rural areas, internal contradictions increased as a result of the policy of seizing the peasants' land pursued by the nobles and the shah's entourage and because of the growing separatist struggle between the khans of the larger tribes. The colonial powers, in particular Russia and Britain, exploited these tribal feuds to further their own ends.

Thus it can be seen that throughout Asia and North Africa the steady deterioration of the position of the masses was gradually leading to a situation where popular resistance was inevitable. This resistance was directed against cruel forms of feudal exploitation and the unlimited power of feudal hierarchies and bureaucracies, and last but not least, of foreign colonialists. The activity of the foreigners which served to aggravate the crisis in the feudal system was at the same time directed towards the preservation of certain feudal practices thus putting the brakes on the process of social advance required to bring about the final demise of feudal society.

The popular movements which emerged at this period and which all adopted tactics of armed struggle had much in common since they were all born of similar developments taking place in all colonial and dependent countries. However, specific local conditions led to various differences within this common framework.

In those countries which had been turned into colonies of European powers popular resistance was directed first and foremost

against the foreign invaders, in whom the masses saw their main exploiters and the principal source of their suffering and oppression. Sometimes in such situations sections of the nobility, which had not yet become the colonialists' allies and loyal supporters, were also known to take part.

In those countries which retained their formal independence (China, Persia and the Ottoman Empire) popular resistance was directed against the feudal nobility in power. On some occasions the leaders of such resistance movements, which were led by peasants and the urban poor, saw in the Europeans an element which they could turn to for assistance in their struggle against feudal patterns of exploitation.

Like most popular movements at this stage of historical development, before the emergence of classes capable of organising effective opposition to feudalism, these uprisings in Asia and Africa bore a religious or sectarian character reflecting the age-old aspirations of the peasantry to a "levelling" of social and property distinctions and an idealisation of the traditional commune. This was to be seen both in the T'ai-P'ing Rebellion in China and the Babist revolt in Persia.

The Indian Mutiny of 1857-1859

The only organised group in India at that period was that of the Sepoy troops. The Indian soldiers and junior officers represented the anti-British attitudes of the peasant masses and other sections of the population with whom they had a good deal in common. In addition, in the mid-nineteenth century their own position was made much more difficult than before. The British authorities after completing their conquest of the country paid less heed to the needs and wishes of their Indian troops, whose salaries and pensions were duly cut down. These troops were also subjected to racial discrimination and humiliation and rough treatment at the hands of their arrogant British commanders. The Sepoys were at the same time most unwilling to be sent outside India on military campaigns that were being conducted by Britain in Afghanistan, China and Persia.

The revolt of the Sepoys in Meerut marked the beginning of a large-scale national uprising which gave expression to the people's bitter indignation at their treatment at the hands of their British masters. On May 10, 1857 the Sepoy detachments in Meerut, with support from the local inhabitants, took up arms and set free a number of soldiers who had been arrested for insubordination the day before. After slaying the British garrison officers the Sepoy regiments marched to their country's ancient

capital, Delhi. En route large numbers of peasants flocked to join them. British forces succeeded in holding the Meerut garrison but they were besieged for a considerable time by insurgent peasants from the nearby villages.

On reaching Delhi, helped by local Indian detachments and the local inhabitants, the insurgent army had little difficulty in capturing the city and wiping out the small British garrison there.

The last representative of the Great Moguls who was little more than a powerless pawn in the pay of the British, the aged Bahadur Shah II, was proclaimed ruler of all India. In this restoration of the empire of the Great Moguls the insurgent soldiers and the people saw as it were a symbol of the abolition of foreign rule and their independence regained. After the capture of Delhi uprisings started to break out in various other towns: they spread along the Ganges and Jumna valleys in central India, where local rulers but recently deprived of their domains and privileges were to take an active part in the fighting. In Cawnpore an important role in the preparation and leadership of the uprising was played by the son of the last Maratha peshwa, Nana Sahib, whom Governor Dalhousie had deprived of his hereditary succession.

On July 4th two Sepoy regiments collaborating with Nana Sahib captured the arsenal and prison in Cawnpore and released the prisoners. The remaining Sepoy detachments in the area and the local inhabitants immediately rallied to their support. Armed bands of peasants and craftsmen were set up and Nana Sahib declared himself peshwa, acknowledging the Great Mogul as his overlord. By the end of the month, the British officers besieged in the Cawnpore garrison were obliged to surrender. In the principedom of Jhansi, which had been annexed by Dalhousie, the Sepoys also revolted and part of them set out to join forces with the defenders of Delhi. In Oudh which had suffered a similar fate to Jhansi preparations for an uprising began immediately after annexation. One of the active leaders of this uprising was Ahmed Shah, a powerful landowner who had been stripped of his estates by the British.

His fiery speeches, coloured with religious exhortations, exposed the base motives behind the colonialists' policies and attracted large sections of the masses to the struggle. It was the peasants who first revolted in Oudh in the region of Lucknow. The Sepoy detachments which were sent out to crush this revolt went over to the peasants' side. The Sepoy detachments stationed in Lucknow revolted at almost the same time and with the support of the townspeople succeeded in capturing the city. The Oudh dynasty which had been deposed by the British declared itself once more in power. Meanwhile, however, in the fortified resi-

dence of the local governor and the surrounding area the British succeeded in holding out.

The successes scored in this uprising, known as the Indian Mutiny, and the abolition of colonial rule in a number of areas between Delhi and Calcutta sowed panic among the British authorities. In the main centres of the revolt they only had limited forces at their disposal. Neither were the British very sure of their position in the south, or of the loyalty of various of their minions among the local nobility. Despite ruthless precautionary measures the British also feared the outbreak of a revolt in the colonial capital itself—Calcutta.

However the weak points of the uprising were soon to come to the fore. The lack of any central organisation and clear objectives made the actions of the Sepoy insurgents far less effective than they might have been. With rare exceptions no real leaders were to emerge from the ranks of the peasants and craftsmen who had taken an active part in the struggle, although they fought in the battles against the British obediently following the local nobles, priests and mullahs then in power. Furthermore the nobles who actively opposed British rule were unable to come to an agreement between themselves and organise a united struggle.

The alliance between the colonialists and local rulers in many areas was also to prove fatal for the future of the uprising, for by this time the British had amassed considerable experience in making use of national and religious strife and India's lack of unity so as to further their own ends.

In the Punjab, for example, the British succeeded with the support of the sirdars who had come over on to their side not only to crush local anti-colonial outbreaks but also to use the troops of the Sikh nobles to put down the mutiny elsewhere. The British were able to send a 40,000-strong army to crush the revolt at its heart and capture Delhi.

This army laid siege to the ancient capital, which held out for four months, thanks to the heroic resistance of the insurgent troops and the townspeople. Sepoy regiments and Wahhabite units led by a Sepoy officer came to their help from other parts of the country. The popular masses played an important part in defending the city. A revolutionary council consisting of representatives from the various Sepoy regiments was set up and Commander-in-Chief elected. The Council also adopted a number of measures promoting the interests of the people and designed to maintain order and organisation in the besieged city. Salt taxes were abolished and rich merchants were obliged to pay heavy taxes. Hoarding of food supplies was made subject to serious punishment. The Council demanded that their Emperor Bahadur Shah II take steps to improve the conditions of the peasants and

wipe out corruption in the system of tax collection. However, differences between various factions of the nobility and its representatives on the Council and the popular masses soon came to the surface and threatened the city's united stand. Many of the nobles were by this time reluctant to hold out any longer against the British and when in September 1857 the British received new reinforcements with siege artillery they were soon able to launch an assault on the city. After long battles the city finally fell and the British celebrated their victory with ruthless reprisals. Many of the inhabitants left Delhi in the wake of the remnants of the insurgent troops.

Bahadur Shah II later surrendered to the British after he had been promised that his own life and those of his sons would be guaranteed. However, soon afterwards a British officer gave orders for the princes to be killed and later Bahadur Shah died in exile.

After laying siege to Delhi with an army from the Punjab, the British high command proceeded to wipe out the centres of revolt in the Ganges valley with troops sent out from Calcutta. The British captured Allahabad and Benares and went on to take Cawnpore in July 1857 despite determined resistance by the local population. The remainder of Nana Sahib's army continued to resist the British even after they had been obliged to withdraw from their original strongholds. In the autumn of that year, despite energetic efforts on the part of new ruler of Cawnpore installed by the British, Sepoy troops from Gwalior and some of the detachments, which had made their way that far after Delhi had fallen to the British, rallied to the support of Nana Sahib. Although popular resistance continued in this region, British troops were meanwhile sent into Oudh. In November 1857 the British succeeded in forcing their way through to Lucknow and relieving the beleaguered garrison and the British who had sought refuge there. However they failed to regain control of the city and withdrew to Cawnpore.

Only after bringing in new reinforcements from Persia and diverting troops which were on their way to China from Singapore were the British able to put more effective pressure on Nana Sahib's forces and cut off central India from Oudh. By the spring of 1858 a 70,000-strong army had been mustered for operations in this area. In March British troops closed in on Lucknow, the capital of Oudh.

Meanwhile in Oudh conflict between the popular masses and the representatives of the nobility engaged in the campaign was increasingly disrupting the resistance movement. In January 1858 there were even armed skirmishes between some of the units under Ahmed Shah and those commanded by certain nobles. All

this served to weaken the insurgents' resistance to the superbly equipped British army. On March 14th Lucknow fell and was to be the scene of brutal reprisals and plunder lasting for more than two weeks.

Nevertheless Ahmed Shah succeeded in keeping a considerable part of his army intact. He did not abandon the struggle which after the capture of Lucknow continued mainly in the form of guerilla activities against the numerically superior British troops. In central India at this juncture a talented guerilla leader Tantia Topi gained prominence. The *rani* (Hindu queen) of Jhansi was to inspire the resistance fighters by her tremendous courage in battle. When the capital of Jhansi was captured by the British in April 1858 she managed to escape to safety. After joining Tantia Topi's forces she later perished in an encounter with the colonialist troops.

Guerilla activity continued, but the resistance fighters found themselves in a more and more difficult position. Gradually nobles who were loyal to the British started giving them more active support, and more and more of the nobles who had taken part in the revolt decided to go over to the side of the British. British manoeuvres served to further this development. The India Act of 1858 dissolved the East India Company, brought India under the direct control of the British Crown and guaranteed the immunity of the domains of the princes and nobles. In a royal proclamation Queen Victoria solemnly decreed that the rights, honour and dignity of native princes would be scrupulously observed.

Many local princes actively assisted the British to crush the popular resistance. One of these princes succeeded in capturing Ahmed Shah and for the price of 50,000 rupees he was handed over to the British. Similar intrigues were involved in the capture and betrayal of Tantia Topi to the British.

The British authorities made cruel reprisals against the guerilla detachments. However, at the same time the British were also obliged to take certain steps to mitigate the deep-rooted contradictions that abounded in the agrarian system. The law of 1859 which established fixed land rents served to curb the arbitrary practices of the landowners. It also recognised the tenant-farmers' hereditary right to plots which they had been working for over 13 years.

This great popular rising, the Indian Mutiny, was finally defeated. There was as yet no class in India capable of providing a struggle against colonial rule with effective leadership. The nobility, a section of which had made a last attempt to throw off British rule, were now for all intents and purposes allied to the British. Neither did there exist in mid-nineteenth-century India the necessary conditions to ensure coordinated unity in

such a struggle throughout the country as a whole. However, the unsuccessful uprising of 1857-1859 was not an entirely wasted effort. It pointed to the great possibilities of mass resistance and provided a source of inspiration for Indian patriots. The experience gained by the peasant masses which had taken part in the Mutiny was to prove invaluable in subsequent stages of the popular resistance movement.

The Babist Revolt in Persia

The causes of the popular uprisings in Persia in the middle of the nineteenth century were the same as those behind similar movements in other Asian countries. The European penetration of this still independent country served to increasingly undermine the feudal order.

The arbitrary measures and feudal exploitation of local rulers brought the masses particularly cruel hardship at a period when traditional natural economies were collapsing. For this reason in Persia, as was also the case in China, the popular uprising was directed first and foremost against local landowners and their practices. This struggle also contained the inevitable religious sectarian elements. Religious features common to popular movements at a particular stage of historical development, were to assume specific prominence in Moslem countries, where the official state religion often provided the basis of civil and criminal law.

The Babist uprisings were bound up with a sectarian movement, which first made its appearance at the beginning of the nineteenth century, that of the Shi'ite sect. The adherents of this sect believed in the imminent appearance of the Imam Mahdi who would usher in an era of justice on earth. Before the coming of this Messiah, the appearance of a messenger was expected who would announce the Messiah's will and who would represent a Bab (or gate) through whom the people would be sent the renewed divine revelation.

In 1844 one of the followers of this cult Mirza 'Ali Mohammed declared himself to be the Bab and started to propagate his teaching which represented a continuation of Shi'ite precepts. His pupils and followers came to be known as Babis. The Bab's preaching to the effect that a kingdom of justice would be established on earth and his exposure of the injustice and oppression effected by the religious and temporal leaders evoked a keen response among the craftsmen, peasants and lower echelons of the religious hierarchy. At the outset the Bab even hoped to win over to his following the Shah and members of his entourage. However the authorities soon started to persecute the Babis and finally

captured and imprisoned the Bab himself. While in prison the Bab declared himself to be the Imam Mahdi. He maintained close contact with his followers and in his book entitled *Bahain* (Revelation) attempted to systematise and provide religious and philosophical substantiation for his teaching.

The Bab contended that there existed religious laws, enumerated in the books of the prophets, which corresponded to the needs of each era of human history. The Books of Moses, the Gospels and the Koran had each corresponded to the needs of a specific epoch. He went on to assert that by this time the Koran was already outdated and the time had come for men to adopt a new religion and new sacred writings, which the Bab was in fact offering in the form of his *Bahain*. According to the Bab's teaching a reign of justice was to be established throughout the whole world but first of all it was to come into being in the five main provinces of Persia. All those who did not accept the Bab's teaching and all foreigners would be banished from the land and their property confiscated and distributed among the Babis. In the realm of the Babis the principle of universal equality would be acclaimed and men and women would be accorded equal rights. Although the Bab's teaching expressed the anti-feudal aspirations of the popular masses, it reflected still more prominently the interests of the merchant class to which the Bab himself belonged. It was no coincidence that alongside his promises to uphold inviolability of person, property and domicile, there was provision for commercial correspondence to be absolved from censorship, for the payment of debts to be made obligatory, for the recognition of interest on loans and the right of merchants to travel beyond the confines of the "Babist realm" to pursue their trading activities.

Meanwhile the Bab's numerous followers among the peasants and craftsmen read their own ideas on equality into his teaching. Many pupils of the Bab went further than their teacher in expressing the people's cherished hopes. For example, the mullah Mohammed-Ali from Barfurush, himself of peasant stock, taught that in the realm of the Babis "all people now of high and important calling will be accorded low rank, while all those now of low rank will attain high rank", and that there would be no taxes and obligatory labour services for the peasants.

At a Babist gathering in 1848 in the village of Bedesht attended by more than 300 representatives from various regions, as a result of the considerable influence exerted by Mohammed-Ali from Barfurush and the woman-preacher Kurrat Ulyain these new ideas were officially adopted by the movement, and subsequently propagated by the various Babis after they had returned to their native districts.

The death of Mohammed Shah in the autumn of the same year was followed by the inevitable dispute over the succession and the redistribution of a number of important state offices. Many Babis considered this to be a propitious moment for embarking on an armed struggle. In the province of Mazanderan about 700 armed Babis from Barfurush encamped fifteen miles from the town and proceeded to build a fortress. Soon over two thousand peasants and craftsmen from various villages and towns had gathered there. Under the leadership of Mohammed-Ali they attempted to lay the foundations for the establishment of the "realm of justice". All property was declared communal and all were obliged to work and eat according to communal principles.

The insurgents were afforded considerable assistance by the peasants who supplied them with food, livestock and fodder. Attempts on the part of the local authorities to put down this nucleus of the "Babist realm" ended in failure: detachments of the Shah's troops sent out from the capital were beaten back. This success in Mazanderan inspired the Babis in other areas to follow suit and preparations for an armed struggle were made in a number of towns.

At the beginning of 1849 new units of government troops approached Sheikh-Tebersi, where they besieged the insurgents and cut off their supplies. Despite desperate shortages of food and ammunition, the Babis held out valiantly until May against the Shah's 7,000-strong army. In May the remaining defenders of the city surrendered after being promised that their lives would be spared. However, they were all wiped out to a man with savage cruelty.

The defeat of the Babis at Sheikh-Tebersi did not deter the Babis in other areas from continuing with their preparations for an armed uprising. At the beginning of 1850 an uprising broke out in Yazd, which the government troops soon succeeded in quelling. However, some of these Babis managed to escape the subsequent reprisals and led by Said Yahya made their way south from Yazd to Neyriz. Here, in June 1850, another revolt broke out which was widely supported by the local peasants. Once again the local authorities, armed as they were with artillery, soon succeeded in capturing Neyriz and subduing the insurgents. However, in answer to the cruel reprisals against the Babis, after a short interval, a new, more powerful wave of revolt started.

In Zanzan (Persian Azerbaijan) the Babis succeeded in gaining many new followers, and by 1849 had acquired considerable influence in the towns. The arrest of one Babi in May 1850 sufficed to spark off an insurrection. Soon most of the town was in the hands of the Babis. Under the leadership of Mohammed-Ali

of Zanzan, the blacksmith Kazem and the baker Abdullah the Babis began to make preparations to withstand a siege. The first attack by the Shah's forces was successfully repulsed. All the inhabitants, including women and youths, took part in the town's defence.

At the beginning of July 1850 the authorities decided to have the Bab executed, hoping thereby to prevent the uprising from spreading throughout the country. However, this measure did not achieve the desired results. The Babis in Zanzan put up staunch resistance until almost the end of 1850 and they were only defeated when a 30,000-strong army supported with artillery was sent out against them. No mercy was shown even to the children and the aged among the city's defenders.

Meanwhile before Zanzan surrendered another uprising broke out among the peasants of Neyriz and the surrounding district. Driven to desperation by hardship and exploitation, they left their villages for the mountains where they set up fortified strongholds. The peasants put up firm resistance to the onslaught of the government forces, employing guerilla tactics in order to capture guns and even cannon.

Finally the Shah's forces succeeded in surrounding the insurgents' hide-out, and with the help of the other mountain tribes succeeded in wiping out the Babis almost to a man. Particularly cruel reprisals followed. Prisoners were burnt alive, subjected to inhuman tortures and even shot from cannon.

By the end of 1850, the authorities had succeeded in subduing all other centres of the revolt. Isolated outbreaks in the north continued as late as 1852 but they were all rapidly crushed.

An unsuccessful attempt on the life of Shah Nasr ed-Din in August 1852 resulted in the execution of 28 Babis in the capital who were accused of conspiracy in this terrorist act. Throughout the whole of Persia followers of the Bab's teaching were persecuted and sentenced to death. The defeat of the Babist uprisings showed that the anti-feudal movement had not yet progressed beyond the stage of isolated, mainly spontaneous uprisings of craftsmen, petty traders and peasants. Here, as in other parts of Asia, classes capable of leading and organising a united anti-feudal movement had not yet emerged.

Indeed, the religious and mystical teaching of the Bab, in which the peasants and urban poor among the movement's followers attempted to incorporate their ideas of freedom and equality was ill-equipped to promote the unity of such a movement and coordinate all the various anti-feudal forces in the land. Later this teaching which was to abandon those ideas which alarmed the propertied classes was to degenerate into what came to be known as Bahaism. One of the Bab's pupils who set out to

reform his master's teaching, Baha'ullah, and his followers, the Baha'is, turned their back on the anti-feudal and democratic principles contained in the Bahain. Bahaism was thus ill-adapted to win the support of the masses and was to become little other than the ideology adopted by the merchant class in the service of foreign capital.

The Babist uprisings not only alarmed the ruling classes but also convinced the more progressive sections among them of the urgent need for reform. The Grand Vizier Mirza Taki Khan (Nasir al-Mulk) was to become the spokesman of this faction. Yet since the support for such reforms was even more limited than had been the case in Turkey, the efforts of Nasir al-Mulk (his struggle against the arbitrary methods employed by the khans, and his campaign to consolidate the central power and improve the organisation of the armed forces and introduce the first nuclei of secular education) were to prove short-lived. After crushing the Babis the reactionary Shah Nasr ed-Din dismissed and executed his Grand Vizier.

The penetration of Persia by the Western powers which involved fierce rivalries and met with no effective resistance soon reduced the country to semi-colonial status.

The T'ai-P'ing Rebellion

Discontent with feudal exploitation in China against a background of an increasingly acute economic crisis exploded in numerous popular uprisings. Although the peasant disturbances which broke out in various parts of the empire were sometimes serious enough to cause the central authorities a great deal of trouble and to only be suppressed after a long and bitter struggle, they were in the main spontaneous, isolated outbreaks. These by now traditional peasant riots were frequently organised by secret societies and various religious sects.

The outbreak of such movements reflected the aspirations of the masses to liberation from feudal oppression and the naive hope of the peasants that equality might be achieved and the ancient communes, idealised as belonging to a Golden Age, might be restored. At the same time the struggle took the form of opposition to the Manchurian Ch'ing dynasty, which the people saw as the main source of their suffering. These ideas were reflected in the teaching of Hung Hsiu-ch'uan (1814-1864), a village teacher of peasant stock who founded the sect known as the Society of the Heavenly Ruler in Kwangtung in South China.

In this new teaching which Hung started to propagate in 1837 there were elements of Christianity, albeit in a somewhat unusual

interpretation. The ideals of equality and the creation of a "Heavenly Kingdom" on earth, the fight against evil and evildoers—interpreted in this case as representatives of the feudal authorities—and the liberation of the people were the main points of the teaching of Hung Hsiu-ch'uan, who claimed to be Christ's younger brother.

The consequences of the Opium Wars and the forced "opening up" of China, and the one-sided treaties China was obliged to sign with the European powers undermined this feudal society still further and brought still greater hardship to the people. The flood of European wares undermined local crafts and brought impoverishment to native craftsmen; the import of opium bled the country dry of silver and soon made copper money quite worthless. By the Treaty of Nanking China was obliged to pay enormous war indemnity. The Ch'ing dynasty started levying new taxes and requisitions, which greatly worsened the plight of the working people. Indeed, not only were peasants so impoverished that they were obliged to leave their holdings, and craftsmen ruined, unable to find a market for their wares, but the merchants and certain sections of the *shensi* class were also hard hit by the new taxes. This applied especially to the south, where there was a particularly large influx of foreign wares after five ports had been opened to foreign traders. Thus not only working people joined Hung Hsiu-ch'uan's sect but merchants and *shensi* as well.

One of the new members of this sect, the son of a coal miner who was to become an outstanding peasant leader Yang Hsiu-ch'ing, mustered a peasant force to fight against the local nobility. Soon he was to become one of the prominent leaders of the sect and his men were to provide the nucleus of a rebel army. In the mountains of the province of Kwangsi, which were difficult for government troops to penetrate and a long way from the large administrative centres thousands of followers of the Society of the Heavenly Ruler had gathered by the end of the 1840s. In 1850 they started an armed struggle against the Manchurian rulers in the name of "equality for the poor at the expense of the rich".

The fanatical founder of the sect, who in ecstatic trances composed religious-cum-revolutionary hymns, in which were outlined the aims of the movement and the methods by which they were to be attained, appealed to all his followers to burn down their houses and property and, together with their families, join the ranks of the insurgents.

The local authorities were powerless to crush the revolt. The arrival of troops from other provinces and the appointment of the Empire's first minister to the post of commander-in-chief also

proved to no avail. On January 11, 1851, on Hung Hsiu-ch'uan's birthday, the creation of a "Heavenly Kingdom of Great Prosperity" (T'ai-P'ing Tien-Kuo) was proclaimed with due pomp and ceremony. From that time on all the participants of the rapidly spreading movement were known as T'ai-P'ings (the Most Prosperous Ones). The head of the sect, Hung Hsiu-ch'uan adopted the title of Tien Wang (Heavenly King).

In September 1851 the T'ai-P'ings captured the capital of Kwangsi province, Hunan. All powerful officials in the city were killed, and the city treasury and food supplies were confiscated and made the communal property of the T'ai-P'ings. During the six months the T'ai-P'ing army was in control of Hunan the first steps were taken to set up a "Heavenly Kingdom". Hung Hsiu-ch'uan's three closest councillors were accorded the title of Wang and set up a government. The leading role in the government was played by Yang Hsiu-ch'ing, the "Eastern Wang"; it was he who headed the government and acted as commander-in-chief of the T'ai-P'ing forces, which by the end of 1851 numbered over 50,000.

After breaking their way through the lines of the government troops sent out to crush them and following a skilful stratagem devised by Yang Hsiu-ch'ing, in the spring of 1852 the T'ai-P'ing army set off on a victorious march northwards. During this march the army was joined by numerous groups of rebellious peasants, who had been fighting against their local landowners, and many inhabitants of the villages and towns they passed through.

In December the army reached the river Yangtze. With arms seized from the enemy, including cannon, the T'ai-P'ing army soon succeeded in capturing the strongly fortified group of three towns known as Wuhan (Wuchang, Hankow and Hanyang), the largest political and economic centre on the Yangtze.

After this resounding victory the popularity and influence of the T'ai-P'ings spread even more rapidly, and new recruits flocked to join their army by the thousand. The primary unit of the T'ai-P'ing army consisted of five men, four soldiers and their commander. Five of these groups formed a platoon, four platoons a company and five companies a regiment; the regiments in their turn constituted corps and armies. Strict discipline was enforced and a code of military regulations was drawn up. The rebel soldiers worked out their own tactics and a number of talented commanders were to emerge from their ranks who made effective use of the century-old traditions of Chinese military art.

The wide support accorded this army by the people was a highly important factor ensuring its successes. The T'ai-P'ings used to send out their spokesmen in advance of the main army to explain

the aims of the insurgents and appeal to the people to work for the overthrow of the Ch'ing dynasty, to put an end to the back-breaking exploitation of the landowners and destroy cruel governors and administrative officials. In the regions occupied by T'ai-P'ing army the old order was done away with: state chancelleries were abolished, likewise debt records and tax registers. The property of the wealthy and food supplies captured in state warehouses were shared out on a communal basis. Luxury articles and valuable furniture were destroyed, pearls were trampled underfoot so as "to do away with everything that distinguished the poor from the rich".

After the capture of Wuhan, the T'ai-P'ing army, which by this time numbered half a million set out down the Yangtze valley. An enormous fleet of junks loaded with food and ammunition supplies accompanied the army which was swelled by new volunteers all along its route and soon numbered a million men.

In the spring of 1853 the T'ai-P'ings captured the ancient capital of South China, Nanking. Its name was changed to Tai-ching (Heavenly City) and it was made capital of the T'ai-P'ing state. Soon the T'ai-P'ings controlled a large part of South and Central China. The organisation of the new state was elaborated by the T'ai-P'ing leaders in a law entitled "System of Landownership of the Heavenly Dynasty". This was an attempt to put into practice the naive Utopian dreams of the insurgents directed towards the abolition of oppression and exploitation and aimed at introducing universal equality. The Law proclaimed: "All land on this earth is to be tilled by the common labour of all. . . . All inhabitants of this earth must enjoy all together an equal share of the great happiness bestowed on us by our Heavenly Father, the Lord God; fields are to be tilled by all of us, food should be taken together and clothes shared out equally, money spent by men in a community, so that there should be no inequality anywhere and so that all might be clothed and fed." Individual landownership was abolished and land was to be divided up according to the number of mouths to be fed in each family. Women were accorded equal rights with men in the T'ai-P'ing state, and they also received landed plots of a similar size. The peasant commune formed the basic economic, military and political unit. One soldier was recruited from each family, while the commanders of military units also possessed civic authority over the area where their men were stationed.

After the harvest, each commune, which consisted of twenty-five families, was obliged to hand over all their crop to the state granaries with the exception of the necessary amount needed to feed themselves. The T'ai-P'ings were forbidden by law to own any land or have any personal belongings. Attempts were made

to introduce these principles in the towns as well as in the villages. Craftsmen were to unite in groups plying the same craft, hand over all that they produced to the state warehouses and receive in exchange from the state the food allowances they and their families required.

In practice it proved quite impossible to enforce this law. The military tasks of the T'ai-P'ings made it impossible to divide up the land and confiscate the estates of the surviving landowners. Meanwhile, however, the vast majority of tenant farmers ceased to pay rent for their holdings or to carry out any of the former labour services they had been obliged to perform for their former masters.

A number of progressive measures were introduced in the area under T'ai-P'ing control, both in the spheres of education and medicine and with regard to the abolition of reactionary social practices and patterns of family relations.

This revolutionary campaign of the peasantry dealt a heavy blow at the Ch'ing emperors. Government troops were unable to undermine the T'ai-P'ings' hold on the regions which they had occupied. Meanwhile, the power of the Manchu Empire remained intact in the North, although as a result of the T'ai-P'ing successes a revival of the activities of the former secret societies took place in a number of districts and large towns both in the North and the South and this development was accompanied by the outbreak of armed uprisings and a spread of peasant guerilla activities. A fight to this end was organised by the secret society "Triad" to the south of the Yangtze, while in September 1853 an uprising broke out in Shanghai under the leadership of the secret "Society of Daggers". This town was in the hands of the insurgents right up to February 1855, and attempts were made to establish contact with the "Heavenly Capital". An armed peasant movement led by the secret society Nien-Tang gained a fairly wide following in the North. The national minorities in various parts of the country also rose up against the Ch'ing rulers.

Had they joined forces with the T'ai-P'ing campaign, these popular movements might well have overthrown the Manchus. However the narrow-minded sectarianism of the T'ai-P'ings deterred them from allying with any other organisations which did not follow their teaching.

After consolidating their hold over Nanking, the T'ai-P'ings failed to seize their opportunity and send troops north immediately to capture the capital and set up their own state. In many other centres which they had captured earlier (such as Wuhan) their control was far from firm. Indeed after Nanking their advance came to a virtual standstill. This gave the nobles and the landowners the chance to consolidate their positions and muster

forces to meet the T'ai-P'ing threat. The counter-revolutionary army mustered by the feudal nobles of the central provinces led by the powerful Hunan landowner Tsêng Kuo-fan numbered approximately 50,000. The "Hunan braves", as this army was called, fought against the T'ai-P'ing army with greater effect than the government troops.

Not until May 1853 did some of the T'ai-P'ing corps eventually move north. After overcoming tenacious resistance on the part of the Manchu troops by October, they were approaching Tientsin. Although at first it looked as if the capital was in danger, the T'ai-P'ing army by this time found itself in a critical position. Exhausted by the long march, and unaccustomed to the rigorous climate of the North, they reached Tientsin, their ranks greatly depleted. By this time they were also cut off from their supply bases and the expected support from the peasants of the North was not forthcoming. T'ai-P'ing ideas which had gained such a large following in the South did not make the same impact in the North, where the southern dialect was hardly intelligible. Neither did the T'ai-P'ings make any attempt to join forces with the insurgents led by the secret societies.

Government forces constantly harassed the T'ai-P'ing army from all sides inflicting heavy casualties. Reinforcements from Nanking, which were not sent out until May 1854, failed to meet up with the other T'ai-P'ing forces and were defeated in Shantung. Finding themselves encircled, the T'ai-P'ing army fought bravely and to the last man in a desperate campaign lasting two whole years.

Meanwhile an attempt to organise an expedition to the west and establish their rule in the remaining large centres also led to heavy losses. In the years 1853-1856 Wuhan was to change hands several times. The T'ai-P'ing army succeeded in driving back Tsêng Kuo-fan's "Hunan braves", but Tsêng continued to muster more and more men to his counter-revolutionary army and remained a serious threat to the T'ai-P'ing cause.

By 1856 it seemed as if a stale-mate had been reached: the T'ai-P'ing uprising was no longer in a position to contemplate overthrowing the Ch'ing dynasty and conquer the whole country, while the monarchy could not hope to rout the T'ai-P'ing "Kingdom" which incorporated large territories inhabited by tens of millions. However, discord within the T'ai-P'ing movement itself played into the hands of the counter-revolutionary forces and the latter were also afforded assistance from foreign powers.

During the first period of the peasant war the foreign powers waited to see which way the odds would fall. They reckoned that it would be possible to wrest from a weak Ch'ing dynasty new concessions in addition to those which had been gained already

by way of the original one-sided agreements. They attempted to establish contacts with the "Heavenly Kingdom" assuring the T'ai-P'ings of their support for the uprising against their feudal masters and turning to their own ends the T'ai-P'ing illusions to the effect that the Europeans were their "brothers in Christ".

As early as 1854 the European powers were demanding unlimited trading rights from the Peking government and the admission of foreign ambassadors to the capital along with other concessions.

However, it was only after the conclusion of the Crimean War that Britain and France found themselves in a position to exploit a trifling pretext to embark on open military intervention. The so-called Second Opium War had ended in a further serious defeat for the Manchus. The Tientsin treaties, signed not only with the actual enemies—Britain and France—but also with the United States, which had taken no part in the war, represented yet another step towards the enslavement of China by the colonial powers.

The new treaties of 1858 gave Britain and France the right to trade in a number of additional ports, free passage down the Yangtze, and guaranteed their subjects the right to travel at will to any part of the country. China also agreed to a new curtailment of tariff charges and agreed to pay yet another war indemnity. Britain and France were also allowed to send their ambassadors to the capital. In the future all these privileges were also granted to all other foreign powers.

In an effort to obtain still further concessions, Britain and France instigated yet another conflict by sending an expeditionary force to Peking. The Emperor and his courtiers fled in terror from the city. The European forces sacked the city in barbarous fashion and burnt down the Emperor's summer residence with its famous palaces and its priceless art treasures from China and other Asian countries. The Emperor's brother Hung opened the gates of the capital to the enemy. On October 24, 1860 the Peking convention was signed, which opened the port of Tientsin to foreign trade and granted a new series of privileges.

After gaining the desired concessions the foreigners were by this time interested in putting down the T'ai-P'ing revolt. The trading rights recently accorded them and the permission to sail the length of the Yangtze could only be made use of if the Ch'ing monarchy was in control of the whole of Central China. By this time the Europeans had also come to realise that the T'ai-P'ing leaders intended to defend the immunity of their native land and showed no inclinations to grant fettering concessions to foreign powers. Moreover, the T'ai-P'ings no longer entertained illusions to the effect that the Europeans were their "brothers in Christ".

The European powers thus saw themselves obliged to play an active part in the drive to crush the T'ai-P'ing revolt. The forces organised by the British and the French equipped with the latest guns and artillery were to play no small part in the hostilities that followed.

Meanwhile developments within the T'ai-P'ing state also contributed to the final defeat of the uprising.

In the China of that period, where capitalist patterns of economy did not yet exist, a peasant movement lacking a progressive class to guide it was not equipped to usher in a bourgeois order. Still less were the T'ai-P'ing agrarian reforms adequate to enable the establishment of the Utopian state of universal prosperity dreamed of by the peasants. Inequality based on property was to appear within the ranks of the peasantry itself. As for the merchants and those landowners who had joined the uprising in the hope of overthrowing the Manchus, they gradually came to protest more and more strongly against the T'ai-P'ing law designed to introduce complete equality. Even the leaders of the revolt gradually began to depart from these egalitarian principles and develop narrow-minded bureaucratic attitudes. Class contradictions also made themselves felt in Hung Hsiu-ch'uan's immediate entourage. Wei Chang-hou, descended from a line of landowners, organised a conspiracy against Yang Hsiu-ch'ing, defender of the peasants' interests, who staunchly upheld the anti-feudal programme contained in the Land Law. Wei Chang-hou also succeeded in persuading the third Wang, Shih Ta-kai, to join the conspiracy and in September 1856 they made a surprise attack on the residence of Yang Hsiu-ch'ing. He, his family and thousands of his revolutionary supporters were slaughtered.

Wei Chang-hou's action against the veterans of the T'ai-P'ing uprising gave rise to bitter indignation in the army. In November he was relieved of his post and executed, but the struggle among the revolutionary leaders and factions in the movement continued to be rife. Shih Ta-kai left Nanking with a large part of the army and waged an independent campaign against the government troops. After the death of Yang Hsiu-ch'ing who had provided the T'ai-P'ings with such a talented and resolute commander-in-chief, a united command virtually ceased to exist. Military setbacks at the hands of the counter-revolutionary forces in the pay of the nobles and landowners became more and more frequent. By the end of 1856 the T'ai-P'ings had abandoned Wuchang and Hanyang.

After Yang Hsiu-ch'ing's murder the corruption of the T'ai-P'ing leaders proceeded at a much more rapid pace and a new landowning class of Wang princes emerged. While there had



British and French troops force their way into Peking. October 12, 1860. Engraving, 1861

been only four Wangs (when the T'ai-P'ing Tien-Kuo state was proclaimed) including Hung Hsiu-ch'uan himself, by this stage they numbered over 200. They no longer gave any concern to the welfare of the people, although many of them were of peasant stock. The Wangs amassed considerable wealth, reintroduced compulsory labour services and requisitions for the population of the "Heavenly Kingdom". All these developments inevitably led to bitter disillusionment among the peasantry.

However, the peasants' struggle against the feudal order and its personification—Manchurian rule—had not come to an end. Another talented peasant leader was to come to the fore—the commander Li Tzu-ch'eng. The T'ai-P'ing state was indebted to him for its successful defence manoeuvres and a number of offensives in the final period of the fighting. In 1860 he succeeded in inflicting a defeat on the counter-revolutionary troops and saved Nanking. His detachments then marched to Shanghai but although managing to capture a number of other towns en route, Li Tzu-ch'eng failed to capture the city. In the period 1860-1862 Li Tzu-ch'eng's troops scored a number of major victories but they were no longer in a position to save the T'ai-P'ing state.

In 1862 foreign powers started to take an active part in the hostilities against the T'ai-P'ings. They regarded the creation of "volunteer" detachments of hired mercenaries as inadequate in the circumstances and started to employ their regular forces in the area, send the imperial detachments ample supplies and provide the Manchu government with modern weapons, ammunition and military experts.

The interference of the foreign powers facilitated the task of crushing the peasant war and putting an end to the T'ai-P'ing state. Between 1863 and 1865 the government troops succeeded in capturing the vital strongholds in the T'ai-P'ing state. In the spring of 1865 Nanking was encircled and cut off from the surrounding countryside. Under Li Tzu-ch'eng's leadership the besieged inhabitants defended their city heroically against overwhelming odds. Hung Hsiu-ch'uan finally committed suicide and on July 19th the walls of Nanking were blown up. The counter-revolutionary troops forced their way into the city and inflicted cruel reprisals on the survivors. Hundreds of thousands of troops and civilians were slaughtered, while Li Tzu-ch'eng was put to death with bestial cruelty. Scattered T'ai-P'ing units continued to fight on. Peasant guerilla bands remained active in various areas and for the next few years the Ch'ing monarchy was unable to curb peasant disturbances in the North. However the great peasant war was by this time clearly lost.

Yet this great wave of revolutionary ardour did have enduring results. For a start it provided the popular masses with useful

experience to turn to in the course of subsequent uprisings. At the same time, even representatives of the top-level feudal hierarchy who had played an active part in crushing the peasant movement were now coming to realise that it was vital to make some changes in the existing social and economic patterns with a view to preserving and bolstering their power.

The Deepening of Class Contradictions in Japan in the Mid-Nineteenth Century

In the mid-nineteenth century the socio-economic structure of Japan provided a classic example of a feudal society. More than 80 per cent of the population of Japan consisted of peasants, who not only produced their own food and clothes but also an adequate supply of primitive agricultural tools. The land belonged to powerful nobles, while the peasants held hereditary rights of tenure of small plots, and were obliged to perform a large number of labour services and pay numerous taxes. More than half their harvests went to pay their rent for the land which was estimated according to very complicated criteria and depended in the main on the caprices of the nobles' administrative staff and tax-farmers. Different labour services were demanded by different landlords as they happened to think fit. The feudal dynasty of the Tokugawa shoguns which had been ruling the country since the middle of the seventeenth century started introducing a complex system of rules and regulations in an effort to entrench the established socio-economic relations and to rule out the possibility of any future change.

Cruel exploitation of the peasants and incessant crop failures because of frequent natural calamities led to mass famine and the impoverishment of the peasantry. The peasants fell more and more into debt and soon found themselves in the clutches of the money-lenders who gradually took over their holdings, despite the official ban on transactions involving the transfer of land.

Traders and money-lenders started to play an increasingly important role in village life, undermining the bastions of feudal relations and accelerating the ruin of the vast mass of the peasantry.

The abject poverty of the majority of the peasants and the growing dependence of the feudal rulers on merchant creditors had led by the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century to extremely acute class contradictions. Peasant uprisings broke out more and more frequently and the emblem of the peasants' movement—poles with bundles of rice straw tied on to the top of them—became a common sight all over the country. The

peasants took up arms to drive out tax collectors and to oppose the despotism and arbitrary rule of the landowning nobles, merchants and tax-farmers. Many impoverished samurai also joined in this struggle. In the hundred years from 1704-1803 alone, more than 254 major uprisings were recorded (three times more than had occurred in the preceding century). Unrest grew among the discontented sections of the urban poor—the craftsmen and petty traders. Although there was no organised liaison between the two groups, the very fact that these two movements came into being at one and the same time created a serious threat to the established order. The urban poor opposed the arbitrary administration prevalent in the large trading enterprises, which worked hand in glove with the ruling nobles.

Despite the fact that the peasant uprisings were largely isolated outbreaks in different parts of the country and the nobles usually succeeded in quelling them, their very frequency served to seriously undermine the socio-economic structure of Tokugawa Japan more and more as time went on.

The first half of the nineteenth century was marked by an unprecedented wave of peasant uprisings. More than 99 large-scale uprisings were recorded in a mere ten years (1833-1842), which was more than the total for the whole of the seventeenth century. Uprisings of the urban poor also became more frequent and large-scale. In 1837, the joint revolt of the townspeople of Osaka and the peasants from the villages roundabout evoked eager response throughout the country. The insurgents burnt down the houses of the rich, broke into the rice granaries and distributed rice among the people.

Far-reaching economic processes which were taking place in the country were undermining the feudal political superstructure—the dictatorship of the powerful landowning nobles headed by the feudal dynasty of Tokugawa warlords.

US Expansion in Japan

Such was the situation obtaining in the country when the capitalist countries started to put pressure on the Japanese government.

In June 1853 a flotilla of four American warships fitted out with highly efficient artillery and under the command of Commodore Perry approached the shores of Japan. A representative of the Japanese government demanded that the ships withdraw from the straits of Uraga, proposing that they make their way to Nagasaki, the port open for foreigners, and there seek official contacts with the Japanese authorities.

Perry however paid no attention to this order, declaring that he had been assigned to hand over the President's message to the

Emperor at that particular spot with all due ceremonies. In the course of subsequent negotiations Perry also pointed out that he would not hesitate to land his marines in order to carry out the mission which had been entrusted to him.

The Japanese forts in that area were very poorly fortified, only having a few dozen small-calibre cannon at their disposal with no more than ten to fifteen shells each. In order to deter the foreign invaders false batteries made of logs were set up. However, the Americans soon saw through this subterfuge: waves splashed up against one of these batteries and the wooden "cannon" floated away. The Japanese government was completely unprepared to defend its shores.

The American command, realising the helplessness of the Japanese authorities, moved their ships right up into Tokyo Bay close to the shogunate's capital. There was nothing left for the Japanese to do but comply with the demands of the American envoys. With an escort of 300 officers and men and with the muzzles of his cannon trained on the shore Perry handed over the missive of the American President to the Japanese officials. The President proposed in this missive that the Japanese government should abandon its isolationist policy, conclude a trade agreement with the United States and permit the Americans to set up bases for their fleet on Japanese territory. Perry declared that if these proposals were not complied with, the United States would send a much more powerful fleet. He demanded that an answer be delivered by April or May of the following year.

Perry gave the Japanese all this time to think the proposals over because he had meanwhile to set out for China where the T'ai-P'ing revolt was threatening the concessions the USA wrested with such difficulty from Peking.

The Americans decided to support the reactionary Ch'ing regime, demanding in exchange a number of additional concessions. In order to crush the anti-feudal revolution and hoping to exploit the situation so as to penetrate China still further, Perry left Japan as soon as possible.

Meanwhile the government of the shogunate was in a state of helpless panic. As the date of Perry's arrival drew nearer, the differences of opinion in ruling circles grew all the more acute. However, Japan's military weakness was so evident that the majority came out in favour of accepting the American proposals.

In February 1854 the American flotilla, which by now consisted of nine ships and a total force of two thousand sailors and soldiers, again appeared in Tokyo Bay. This time the Americans behaved in a still more arrogant manner. In order to frighten the Japanese the cannon were fired constantly. Perry, threatening to open hostilities, demanded that the Japanese sign a one-sided

treaty similar to that which the United States had concluded with China in 1844. Within range of the American cannon all ready to destroy the capital the Japanese government had no other course open to it but to agree to the conclusion of such a treaty.

Under this treaty the Japanese were obliged to open the ports of Shimoda and Hakodate to American ships, put Shimoda under American control, grant the Americans the right to buy fuel and food supplies in Japan and accept any type of foreign currency for internal circulation. This treaty forced on Japan opened the way for the penetration of American capital of yet another new market. Perry's arrogant tactics met with warm approval in the USA and he was granted a reward of 20,000 dollars by the government.

This treaty with the USA was followed by similar ones forced on Japan by the British in 1854, by Holland in 1857, by France in 1858 and subsequently by several other countries. In February 1855 negotiations between Japan and Russia which had lasted for two years finally reached completion and the first Russo-Japanese treaty was drawn up which gave Russian vessels the right of entry to the ports of Shimoda, Hakodate and Nagasaki.

These unequal treaties forced on Japan aggravated the critical position of the feudal order more than ever. The flooding of the domestic market with foreign wares dealt a heavy blow at Japanese industry. The signing of the various treaties served to arouse more active opposition to the shogunate. The landowning nobles, sections of the impoverished samurai, the courtiers in the Emperor's immediate entourage at Kyoto and even part of the bourgeoisie intimidated by the competition of foreign traders strongly criticised the treaties and the policy pursued by the shogunate. All these various opposition groups started to press the imperial court to return to its traditional conservative policy.

The Meiji Restoration

The shogunate government conscientiously carried out the various stipulations of the treaties concluded with foreign powers, but at the same time secretly made plans to challenge the foreigners. The government hoped in this way to undermine the position of the imperial court, which attempting to gain a following among the people by means of its slogans irreconcilably opposed to foreign penetration and influence. A number of British were murdered and various buildings belonging to foreigners were burnt down. In response to this the Western powers bombarded the coastal towns killing dozens of innocent people.

In 1863 the criminal bombardment of Kagoshima—the centre of the Satsuma principedom—by the British fleet and the bombard-

ment of Shimonoseki in 1864 by combined British, French, American and Dutch fleets, and various other repressive measures on the part of the capitalist powers of Europe and America inflamed the masses with still more bitter hatred than before. Throughout the country voices were to be heard demanding that the Japanese should unite their ranks to drive out the foreigners. The troops of the princes of Satsuma and Mori (Choshu) threatened to revolt against the shogunate if steps were not taken to drive the foreigners from Japanese soil.

The shogunate sent troops out against these insubordinate princes while at the same time refusing to allow the British and French to send military units into the country for the defence of their respective residences. Tariff charges on imported goods were reduced to a mere 5 per cent. These developments served to make the situation in Japan still more explosive.

Diplomats of the imperialist powers actively interfered in the country's internal affairs: France supported the shogunate (supplying its troops with arms and financing its campaign against the princes), while Britain supported the anti-shogunate opposition, counting on a subsequent weakening of the centralised power.

Meanwhile the peasant war in the interior was spreading rapidly. Peasant wars were breaking out one after the other in endless succession. As many as 130,000 peasants took part in the uprisings in Kii province alone. In 1866-1867 uprisings took place throughout the whole of central Japan. The opposition forces also gained ground in the towns, where by this time the young Japanese intelligentsia had started to become familiar with progressive ideas of European democratic thinkers. Gradually the bourgeois opposition, which in addition to the factors mentioned above was opposed to the opening of the country to European industrial goods, joined the struggle against the shogunate, and so did many impoverished samurai.

The rallying force in this struggle were the feudal clans of south and south-west Japan which traded most actively with the foreign powers. Some of their prominent leaders were young samurai. An alliance of princes of the south-west (Satsuma, Choshu and Tosa) were accorded firm support by various banking houses and the Emperor's immediate entourage. Many detachments of half-mercenary, half-volunteer soldiers and others made up of impoverished samurai, craftsmen, peasants and urban poor soon joined the princes' troops. An important role in the leadership of this alliance was played by those sections of the nobility who had recently turned to bourgeois pursuits of commerce and industry. Officially the aim of the uprising was to restore the Emperor's rights which had been usurped by the shogunate. In 1867, a fifteen-year-old by the name of Mutsuhito was on the

throne, a convenient tool in the hands of the anti-shogunate alliance.

In October 1867, the alliance demanded from Shogun Keiki that he "restore" to the Emperor all his former powers. The Shogun, realising the gravity of the situation, agreed to stand down and then in hiding in his castle in Osaka started to make preparations for the inevitable hostilities. The Shogun was still the country's leading landowner in possession of enormous estates. He also had large armed forces at his disposal which had been trained by the French. With these he set out that same year to confront the enemy, but suffered a decisive defeat at the battle of Fushimi. The war continued throughout 1868 and 1869 but the odds were on the side of the anti-shogunate coalition.

The most prominent role in the new government was played by representatives of the Satsuma clan—Okubo and Kido. They tried to unite the country and Europeanise it, first and foremost in the fields of arms and technology. This policy did not satisfy the interests of the peasants who demanded that feudal patterns of agriculture be abolished and that the land be handed over to them.

Peasant resistance did not end with the overthrow of the shogunate. In the period 1868-1878, 185 large peasant uprisings broke out, some of which involved as many as 250,000 people.

The bourgeoisie and the landowners united in a joint attack against the peasantry, putting down such outbreaks by means of regular blood baths.

The events of 1867-1868 are referred to in Japanese history as the Meiji restoration, Meiji (meaning "enlightened rule") being the official name of the reign of the Emperor Mutsuhito.

Chapter Twelve

NATIONAL BOURGEOIS MOVEMENTS IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

The Advance of Capitalism in the 1850s

Although the revolutions of 1848 had not ended in victory, the forces of reaction by this time were unable to halt the advance of social progress. The rapid growth of capitalism in Europe and America lay at the basis of these social changes in the second half of the nineteenth century. Mechanised production had already ousted manual labour in the majority of the countries of Europe and the USA. Large capitalist factories were appearing on the scene in all branches of industry. Important technological innovations were transforming the economy of these countries. The switch from wood to coal and then oil as the main source of fuel also promoted industrial progress. The new method for converting melted cast iron into steel devised by Henry Bessemer and open-hearth furnaces made metal production a much quicker and more streamlined process. Rapid advance in metallurgy acted as a stimulus to other spheres of production. This period also saw rapid expansion of the railways. The total length of the world's railways, which had been a mere 220 miles in 1830, exceeded 150,000 miles in 1870. Important discoveries in physics, particularly in the field of electricity, soon gave rise to the appearance of a new form of communication—the telegraph.

In 1859 Charles Darwin's famous work *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* was published; it was to play a decisive role in the subsequent development of the natural sciences. Important advances were also made in agronomy. More progressive methods of land cultivation were introduced.

Major industrial advance was to be observed in all developed industrial countries from the beginning of the 1850s onwards. However in 1857 Europe and the United States were hit by a new type of crisis, a crisis of overproduction. This was the first time

a crisis of such serious dimensions had been encountered on an international scale. But it was not the last: economic crises of this type have since recurred in the capitalist world at regular intervals—approximately once every ten years.

The Workshop of the World

The most advanced capitalist country at that time was Britain. By subjecting the peoples of a vast empire to cruel exploitation and extorting vast wealth from the colonies, the British bourgeoisie had been able to industrialise the country's economy extremely rapidly. Factory chimneys dotted the British skyline everywhere. By 1870, Britain had become a predominantly urban country with two-thirds of the population living in the towns. Britain produced half the world's iron and her mills produced more cotton material than those of the rest of the world put together. Britain also occupied a leading position in other spheres of industry; she had the world's largest foreign trade and the largest merchant navy.

Britain was at the height of her power during the Victorian era, under Queen Victoria (1837-1901). However, "Merry England" was extremely gloomy for many, with her highly uneven distribution of wealth. The factory owners, bankers, shipping magnates and landlords amassed enormous fortunes during this period. The domestic and foreign policy of the country furthered their interests and the incessant colonial wars in India, China and Africa brought them enormous profits. In the years 1853-1856 when Britain, together with France and Turkey, was waging war against Russia in the Crimea it was above all the common people, on whom the war was forced by the ruling classes of both sides, that suffered.

The working people of Britain were still suffering from extremely hard living and working conditions, portrayed so graphically by the outstanding English novelist Charles Dickens (1812-1870) in his major works of that period, such as *Bleak House*, *Hard Times* and *Little Dorrit*. These novels presented a vivid picture of the cruel calculating rich and the suffering of the honest poor in Victorian England.

The peasants were still worse off, and all the oppressed poor of Ireland, let alone the subject millions in the British colonies, were exposed to merciless exploitation and even physical extermination, like the Maoris in New Zealand.

Britain's working class had grown considerably by this time and it was also more organised. More and more of the workers were starting to join trade unions. By means of strikes and po-

litical demonstrations the British workers succeeded in wresting various concessions from the ruling classes: a ten-hour working day and a law on the protection of child labour. It was largely due to pressure exerted by the workers that the Second Reform Bill was introduced in 1867, giving a much wider section of the population the right to vote. As the working class grew in number and became more politically active, the astute bourgeoisie started resorting to various complicated manoeuvres. The most important among these was a campaign to bring about a split within the working class. With part of the tremendous profits reaped by means of colonial exploitation they decided to buy round the more prosperous sector of the proletariat, the skilled workers. By paying these workers considerably higher salaries and creating for them a number of other privileges the bourgeoisie promoted the creation of a kind of "industrial aristocracy". This aristocracy soon cut itself off from the broad mass of the industrial proletariat and gradually became the tool of the bourgeoisie within the ranks of the working class.

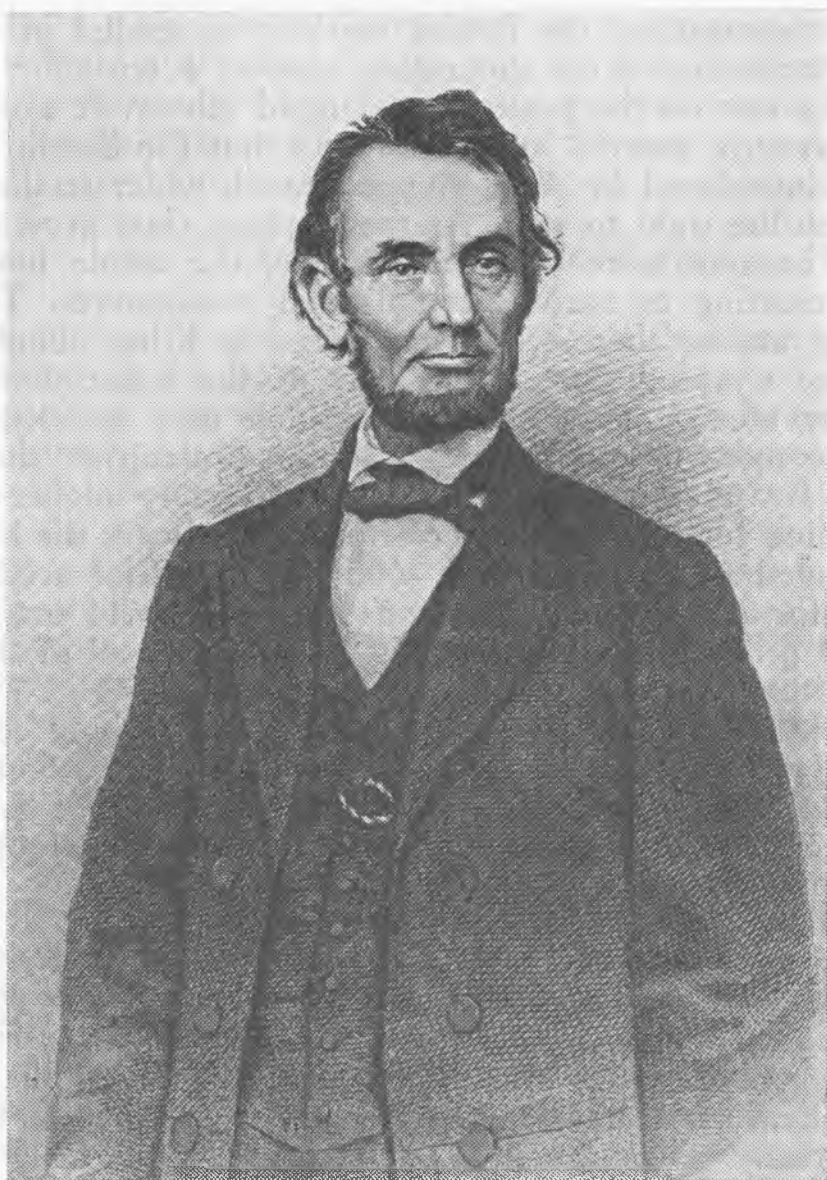
By their efforts to split the proletariat and making occasional democratic concessions in social and labour legislation in the 1850s and 1860s, the British ruling classes managed to consolidate their positions without turning to the army or the police for support.

The American Civil War

While capitalism was already far advanced in Britain, various obstacles held up its development in the other countries of Europe and America.

Throughout the nineteenth century capitalism was developing extremely rapidly in the United States. The exploitation of more and more new lands as the settlers moved westwards, driving out the Indians as they went, and the labour shortage (despite the increasing influx of immigrants) stimulated a rapid and wide-scale introduction of machinery.

Capitalist development in the United States did not proceed at a uniform rate. Capitalist production relations soon asserted themselves in the North where large industrial centres grew up, and in the West, which was predominantly agricultural. In the South meanwhile, slave-labour was still being used and the number of plantations employing slave-labour was actually on the increase. The southern part of the United States was by this time the world's major centre of slave-labour, and by 1860 there were over four million Negro slaves there. Negro slaves could be sold, mutilated or even killed with impunity and they could be forced



Abraham Lincoln. Mid-nineteenth century engraving

under threat of flogging to work from morn till night under their harsh masters on the cotton or tobacco plantations.

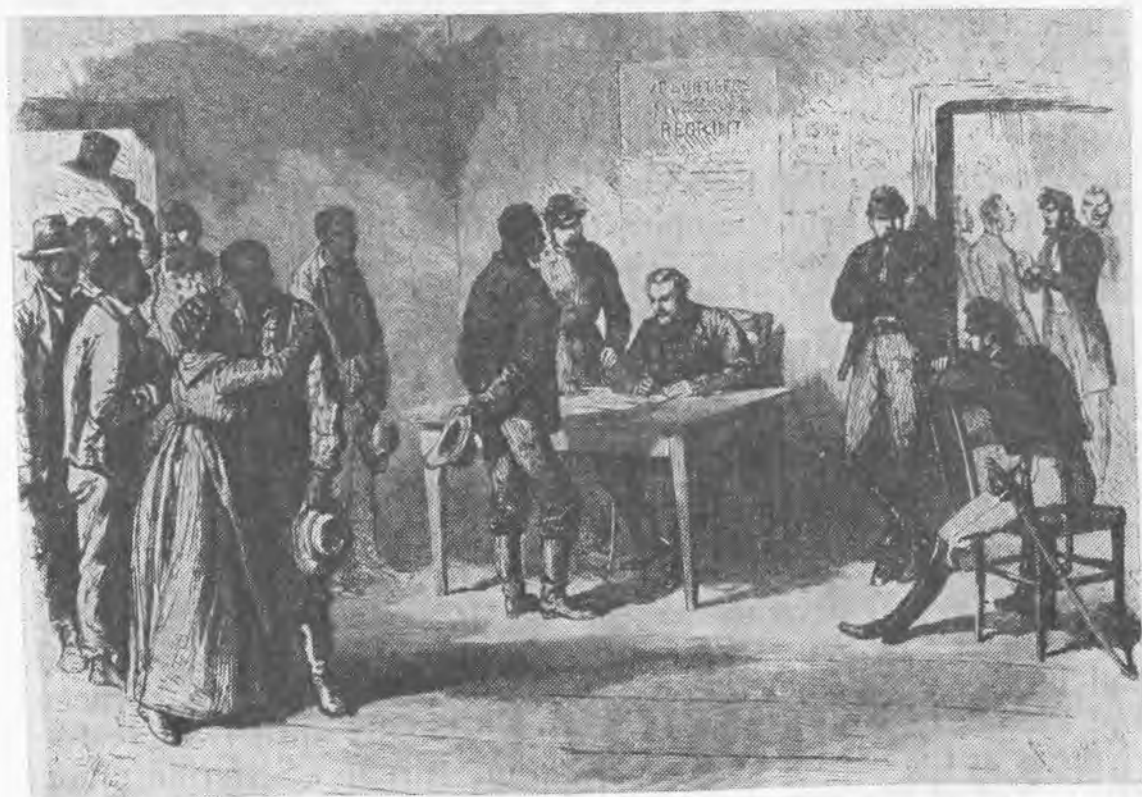
These two entirely different systems—that of the North and West, that was capitalist and based on hired labour, and the slave-owning South—were inevitably destined to come to blows sooner or later.

Over the decades the contradictions between the two systems grew, sometimes giving rise to sharp conflict. Finally in 1861, after Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865)—the son of a poor farmer, an honest democrat and one of ardent opponents of slavery (or abolitionists as they were known in the United States)—had been elected President, the slave-owners from the South organised an

open revolt against the federal government, splitting away from the Union to set up the Confederate Southern States of America with its own government and President. The rich slave-owning planter, Colonel Jefferson Davis, was elected President, who did not hesitate to declare in public that the Negro was inferior to the white man and that slavery was the normal condition for him.

From 1861 to 1865 the United States was in the throes of a grim Civil War. At first the odds were on the side of the Confederates, since the latter were better versed in the military arts. However, as more and more of the American people joined the war against the South and the war assumed a more revolutionary character the position changed. The turning point of the war was Abraham Lincoln's decree to the effect that plots of land in the West would be allotted to all those who were ready to work them (the Homestead Law) and that all slaves belonging to the Southern rebels were declared free as from January 1st, 1863. These laws possessed great revolutionary significance and attracted many recruits to the Northern Army. From then on the Confederates suffered one defeat after another and by the spring of 1865 they were finally routed.

The Civil War resulting in the abolition of slavery represents a heroic chapter in the history of the American people, a second



Negro volunteers enlisting in General Grant's Army. Print, 1864

revolution, as it were. However, the people did not succeed in retaining its hold over the harvest of victories reaped in the course of this heroic struggle. On April 14, 1865, five days after the Southerners had capitulated, President Lincoln, who had nobly led the American people throughout the critical years of the Civil War, was shot by an agent of the defeated slave-owners. In the years that followed the big bourgeoisie gained firm control of the country's state apparatus. Now that slavery no longer presented an obstacle to its advance, capitalism made rapid strides in the United States, outstripping the older capitalist states of Europe in its pace of development.

The Unification of Italy

National unity, liberation from foreign domination, and independent statehood were still to be achieved by a number of countries and peoples of Europe. This became a particularly vital issue in Italy at this period. After the unsuccessful revolutions of 1848-1849 Italy still consisted of eight separate states, while French troops were stationed in Rome, and Lombardy and Venetia in the North were in Austrian hands.

Patriotic Italians were burning to drive out the foreign oppressors and unite the country as a single independent state. There were two main standpoints on how these objectives might best be achieved.

In the North, in the Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia, the wealthy circles—factory owners, liberal landowners, high-ranking government officials—who were wary and distrustful of the popular masses, held the opinion that the unification of the country should be engineered “from above”, with the Piedmontese monarchy as its central nucleus, by means of diplomatic and political manoeuvring, without involving the masses. The main proponent of this approach was the Premier, the rich landowner Count Camillo Benso di Cavour. Hoping to establish closer links with Louis Napoleon's France and thus secure her military and political support for this cause, Cavour had involved Piedmont in the Crimean War (1853-1856). However, participation in this war had in no way furthered the interests of the Italian people: all that was left as a monument to this campaign was the Italian cemetery in Sebastopol. In 1859, after a secret agreement had been concluded between Cavour and Napoleon III, France and Piedmont went to war with Austria, and gained two notable victories at the battles of Magenta (June 4th) and Solferino (June 24th). Yet at the very moment when the Austrians faced imminent defeat, Napoleon III betrayed his Italian allies and secretly

concluded a separate armistice and then peace with Austria, under which Lombardy was ceded to Piedmont, the Austrians retained Venetia, and Savoy and Nice were handed over to France. Thus Cavour's scheming did little good.

Meanwhile, supporters of a different kind of campaign for political unification of Italy were also active. These were the members of the "Young Italy" movement (*Giovane Italia*) led by the outstanding Italian patriots Giuseppe Mazzini (1805-1872) and Giuseppe Garibaldi (1807-1882). The "Young Italy" movement did not place its hopes in foreign governments and political intrigue but on the courage and bold revolutionary action of its members. This party instead of fearing the people sought its support. When Cavour's opportunist schemes to engineer "revolution from above" were foiled, "Young Italy's" influence in the country gained ground rapidly and from then on it started to play a leading role in the movement for unification.

In 1859 a popular rising led by "Young Italy" in the northern principalities of Parma, Modena and Tuscany and in papal Romagna succeeded in overthrowing their rulers and uniting with the Kingdom of Piedmont. Later a popular uprising also broke out in the Kingdom of Sicilies, and Garibaldi hurried to the rescue.

Two ships dropped anchor off the rocky shores of Sicily one day in May 1860, and detachments of armed men in red shirts disembarked. This was Garibaldi's famous "Thousand", who rallying to the battle-cry of "Viva l'Italia", proceeded to do battle with the government troops. Supported by the local peasants, Garibaldi's Redshirts inflicted a crushing defeat on the army of the Neapolitan King. After this volunteers flocked to join Garibaldi's contingent and on a forced march, making short work of the King's regiments they met on the way, his by now sizable army made its way across the whole of Southern Italy and broke into Naples. The Bourbon monarchy was soon overthrown and a jubilant Naples greeted Garibaldi as a national hero. However he and his followers proved ill-equipped to unite the country on a republican basis. In the autumn of 1860, the North and South were united under the sceptre of the King of Piedmont-Sardinia, Victor Emmanuel, who marched in triumph into Naples, where Garibaldi of his own free will surrendered to him his powers of dictatorship accorded him by the people. The services of the legendary hero were no longer required and he returned to the obscurity of his native fishing island of Caprera. Herzen wrote that he was dismissed "like a cabby who had brought his passenger to the required destination". In March 1861, the united Kingdom of Italy was proclaimed in Turin, and King Victor Emmanuel was hailed as its ruler.



Giuseppe Garibaldi. Photograph taken in 1862

The final unification of the country was not achieved until a few years later. In 1866 Venetia was freed from the Austrians as a result of the Austro-Prussian War, and in September 1870, after the fall of the Second Empire, the ancient capital Rome was once more restored to Italy.

The unification of Italy was effected by two parallel processes, one "from above" and one "from below". The decisive role in this movement was played by the revolutionary activity of the popular masses headed by Garibaldi and Mazzini. However, they proved unable to carry this process forward to its logical conclusion—namely, the creation of a republic—and the liberal bour-

geoisie, once it had taken power into its own hands, secured its ambition of uniting Italy in the form of a bourgeois constitutional monarchy. Yet the very fact that the country was now united represented an important step forward in the history of the Italian people.

National Liberation Movements in the Balkans

The enslaved peoples of the Balkan peninsula also waged a staunch struggle against their foreign oppressors. For many decades the Rumanians, Bulgars, Serbs, Albanians and Montenegrins had been suffering from cruel Turkish oppression. On several occasions they had taken up arms against their oppressors. In the 1850s and 1860s the liberation movement against the Turks entered a new, more effective stage.

The Bulgarian Liberation Movement. Serbia

In 1850, the Bulgarian peasants in the Vidin region rose up against their Turkish masters. The uprising was crushed, but the Bulgarian people's liberation struggle continued in other forms. A major role in the preparation of armed insurrection against the Turks was played by the outstanding Bulgarian revolutionary Georgi Rakovsky (1821-1867). Later his place was to be taken by Vasil Levsky (1837-1873) and Lyuben Karavelov (1837-1879), democratic champions of the people, who were both ardent republicans, despite various divergences in their political views. The Bulgarian Central Revolutionary Committee was set up under Levsky and Karavelov in 1870, and this body was to become the organisational headquarters of the struggle of the Bulgarian people against Turkish domination.

As early as 1830, Serbia had gained the status of a self-governing principality, obliged however to recognise the Sultan of Turkey as its supreme ruler. However, in the 1860s she made important advances along the road to complete independence. In 1867 the Turkish garrisons stationed in Belgrade and other Serbian fortresses were withdrawn from the Serbian principality.

The Establishment of the Rumanian State

In 1859 the Rumanian inhabitants of two princedoms which had been artificially split away from each other—Moldavia and Walachia—united as one state, Rumania as it was to be called

from 1861 onwards. Colonel Alexander Cuza was elected Prince of Rumania, but in 1866 he was overthrown by reactionary nobles and officers, and a German Hohenzollern prince was installed in his place. Nevertheless, the unification of the Rumanian state was in itself progressive. Although Rumania still officially acknowledged the Sultan as its supreme ruler, for all practical purposes from 1859 onwards Rumania was an independent state.

The Cretan Uprising

However not all the liberation movements of this period were crowned with success. In 1866 an uprising broke out on the island of Crete, where the people had been driven to despair by merciless Turkish oppression, and they rose up as a man to fight to free themselves from the foreign yoke. Many champions of freedom set out from Europe to join the fight for the Cretans' just cause. Among them was the French revolutionary and friend of Blanqui, Gustave Flourens (1838-1871). However none of the great powers came to the help of little Crete and in 1869 the uprising was ruthlessly suppressed.

The Polish Insurrection of 1863

Ever since the partition of Poland by Russia, Prussia and Austria at the end of the eighteenth century, the people's struggle for liberation had gone on uninterrupted. The Poles strove to liberate their country from foreign domination and reunite it. This task was made all the more difficult by the fact that Poland's oppressors were three powerful European powers, tsarist Russia, the Kingdom of Prussia (later Germany) and the Austrian Empire. In order to achieve success against such strong adversaries it was vital that the whole Polish people should stand united. The main problem besetting the Polish liberation movement was the fact that its leaders belonged to the nobility and gentry, who were wary of the peasantry and failed to trust or properly acquaint themselves with its just demands. Some of the leaders staked their main hopes on receiving help from the Western powers, convinced that they and not the Polish people would prove the decisive factor in the restoration of their country's sovereignty.

This inherent weakness in the Polish liberation movement determined the negative outcome of the 1863 insurrection, despite the tremendous bravery and heroism that were displayed. The leaders of the rising continued to fear the peasants and pursued a very indecisive policy with regard to them, thereby failing to

rally them to the rising from the very outset. Meanwhile, tsarist Russia and Prussia quickly reached an agreement on what line of action to adopt, while the Western powers, guided by their own ulterior motives, gave no serious consideration to helping the Poles. British and French workers and progressive circles in Russia at once voiced their sympathies with the Polish people but they were unable to give them anything but moral support. The odds were such that by the spring of 1864 the insurrection had been cruelly crushed.

The Unification of Germany

German unification also remained to be achieved. The political reaction which had set in after the revolution of 1848 had been crushed was unable to hold back the rapid economic advance of the German states. In the Rheinland, Saxony, Silesia and Berlin a powerful well-equipped industry grew up and brought about a rapid growth in the proletariat. This rapid capitalist development made the lack of political and economic unity stand out as a still more intolerable anachronism left over from the Middle Ages.

As had been the case in Italy, so in Germany, unification could be achieved by one of the two methods, one starting "from above" and the other "from below". The latter course was followed by progressive German workers led by August Bebel (1840-1913), a talented self-taught turner, who was to become an outstanding organiser of the German workers' movement, and the journalist Wilhelm Liebknecht (1826-1900), a pupil and follower of Karl Marx, with whom he had been on close terms while in exile in London. Bebel and Liebknecht first led workers' unions and later after they had made the acquaintance of Marx and Engels they set up a German Social-Democratic Party in 1869. Well aware of the vital need to unify Germany, they considered that this could only be achieved by revolutionary action on the part of the people whose single goal should be the setting up of a German democratic republic. However Bebel and Liebknecht did not have the support of all the German workers, many of whom joined the General Association of German Workers (*Allgemeiner Deutscher Arbeiterverein*) founded in 1863 by Ferdinand Lassalle (1825-1864). This talented speaker and publicist, who had a way with an audience, was not a true proletarian revolutionary when it came to either his theoretical views or his political activity. With regard to the question of German unity, Lassalle was in favour of the creation of a united Germany under the Prussian monarchy, and even had secret talks with Bismarck

on the subject. His successors among the leaders of the General Association of German Workers continued to pursue this incorrect, opportunist policy. This split in the workers' movement reduced its influence on the course of events leading up to unification.

The unification of Germany was destined to be achieved by other methods. From 1862 onwards, the Prussian government was headed by Otto von Bismarck (1815-1898). This reactionary Pomeranian Junker was at the same time a ruthless man of action and a cunning, subtle politician. Bismarck was well aware of the need to unify Germany, but he spared no effort to make sure that this unification was effected by strictly Prussian methods. "This policy," he said, "cannot succeed through speeches, and shooting-matches, and songs; it can only be carried out through blood and iron."

Indeed the unification of Germany was achieved through "blood and iron". In 1864 in alliance with Austria, Prussia went to war with Denmark, thereby gaining possession of the province of Schleswig while Holstein went to Austria. Two years later in 1866 Prussia declared war on her ally of but a few years before. On June 3rd, 1866, the Austrian army was routed at the battle of Sadowa, and peace was concluded a mere seven weeks after the war had begun. After this defeat Austria was no longer in a position to stand in Prussia's way as the latter proceeded to bring about the unification of Germany under her own hegemony.* Austria also surrendered to Prussia a number of German states which had fought on her side in the war, such as Holstein and Hannover. In 1867 Bismarck succeeded in setting up the North German Confederation, consisting of 22 states and in which Prussia was to play the leading role. This was another important landmark on the road to German unification.

The Second Empire

Yet there was another serious obstacle standing in the way of a Germany united under Prussian leadership—Louis Napoleon's France.

Under the Second Empire France's industrial revolution had taken place. A period of rapid economic development followed and the introduction of up-to-date mechanisation increased France's industrial production three times over. Yet while large modern factories were developing apace, small-scale manual production still continued to play a significant role in the manu-

* Convinced by this time of its powerlessness to lay claim to the leading role amongst the German states, in 1867 the Austrian government set up a dual monarchy—Austria-Hungary.

facture of luxury articles and haute couture. This important economic advance was far from bringing prosperity to all: many small-scale entrepreneurs went bankrupt, unable to compete with large industrial concerns. A sharp rise in the cost of living made things extremely difficult for all the working people.

Meanwhile, the working class was subjected to still greater exploitation than before. All the advantages gained from the new economic progress were enjoyed by the factory owners, entrepreneurs and financiers. The latter were able to line their pockets particularly rapidly by means of all kinds of speculation and financial intrigue indulged in on an unprecedented scale during the years of the Second Empire. The big bourgeoisie and all kinds of dealers made fabulous profits out of the various wars engaged in by the Emperor.

"The Empire means peace," declared Napoleon III soon after he came to power. In actual practice, however, the contrary was to prove the case. There was one war after another and not only because they brought enormous riches to the financiers and industrialists, but because they also served the dynastic interests of the Emperor. The adventurer, now at the helm of state in France after seizing power by force and making capital out of the name of his famous uncle, realised that in order to reinforce his authority he needed military successes. Soon after the beginning of the Second Empire, in 1853, Napoleon III led France to war against Russia. This war lasted for three years, cost France a great deal and took a heavy toll of lives, without bringing her any appreciable advantages. The results of the war of 1859 with Austria were equally insignificant, for while France gained Savoy and Nice she also gained a new enemy in the Italians.

During the 1850s and 1860s France continued to wage incessant colonial wars. This period saw increased French penetration of Algeria and the annexation of a large part of the Sahara. In 1857-1858 and 1860 France waged a war of plunder against China after which she embarked on a war of annexation against Vietnam which was to last for a whole decade. Cambodia and Cochin-China also fell prey to the French colonialists. In 1862 a colonial adventure on an ambitious scale began in Mexico. However this "great imperial enterprise" was to end in a fiasco, and in 1867 the French expeditionary force was obliged to leave Mexico after a humiliating showdown.

The failure of the Mexican expedition was one of the major defeats of the Second Empire, and it was to be followed by a number of others. The opportunistic foreign policy pursued by the Second Empire led to a deterioration in France's relations with a number of major powers such as Russia, Italy and Britain. Napoleon was to suffer his final defeat in his policy

towards Germany. During the Austro-Prussian War France remained neutral, hoping as a result to receive considerable compensation. However Prussia had no such intentions and made no attempt to help France out of her impasse.

By this time there was no concealing the bankruptcy of the Second Empire's foreign policy, which had revealed its inherent weakness and served to hasten its ultimate collapse. The tactics of manoeuvring and courting favour with various groups indulged in by Napoleon III's government, was not destined to muster support for the regime. The elections held at the end of the 1860s revealed that the majority of the population—although different classes for reasons of their own—opposed the corrupt regime of the Bonapartist Empire. The famous writer and democratic thinker Victor Hugo (1802-1885) had written his *Napoléon le Petit* as far back as 1852, and from that time onwards had never ceased to polemicise against the Second Empire. Hugo's anti-Bonapartist sentiments were now shared by the vast majority of the French people.

The Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871

Despite the deepening crisis on the home front, Napoleon III's government continued to embark on new adventures, still convinced that the crisis could only be averted by means of military successes. The obvious enemy at this time was Prussia, who had already cunningly out-manoeuvred France on the diplomatic battle-field. On July 19, 1870, the government of the Second Empire declared war on Prussia.

In Paris, policemen disguised in workers' garb came out into the streets to rally the crowd with cries of "To Berlin!" Napoleon III was made Commander-in-Chief and set out to join the army. Both he and his military advisers were hoping for a rapid victory. However, from the very outset the French troops proved a poor match for the enemy. This war provided yet another reminder of the tottering power of the Bonapartist regime. One defeat followed another and finally, a mere six weeks after war had been declared, on September 2nd, 1870 at the battle of Sedan a 100,000-strong French army led by Napoleon III surrendered to the Germans.

This military disaster decided the fate of the Second Empire. On September 4, 1870 the insurgent people of Paris overthrew the hated government of the Second Empire now stained with yet another humiliating defeat and for the third time a republic was proclaimed.

The Completion of the Unification of Germany

The war continued and Prussian tactics now assumed an unmistakably aggressive character. On January 18, 1871 Wilhelm I of the House of Hohenzollern was proclaimed Emperor of Germany in Versailles occupied by German soldiers. The southern states including Bavaria and Saxony were incorporated into the new Empire. Under the terms of the Peace of Frankfurt concluded with France on May 10, 1871, the German Empire was also to include the newly conquered provinces of Alsace and Lorraine. So at last German unity had been attained by means of "blood and iron" after a war of conquest, and a militaristic Empire headed by reactionary rulers from the Prussian house of Hohenzollern came into being.

The International Workers' Movement

The rapid advance of capitalist industry inevitably went hand in hand with the rapid growth of the working class. The class consciousness of the proletariat, its organisation and militancy also developed apace. By this time the working class had amassed considerable experience in class struggle.

The lessons of the revolutions and counter-revolution of 1848-1849 had also been invaluable experience. Workers began setting up their own organisations; trade unions appeared in Britain, France, the USA and Germany. Strikes became more and more frequent and successes scored by this means served as a stimulus to the movement as a whole. Socialist groups and circles were set up, and workers no longer approached their problems from the narrow angle of their own particular factory, town or country. International proletarian solidarity was gaining ground rapidly, particularly by the beginning of the 1860s. The French and British workers manifested their support for the Polish insurgents in 1863. During the Civil War in the United States, when the British government sought means of helping the slave-owning South, the British workers' organisations put strong pressure to bear on it.

The First International

By the 1860s, after it had amassed considerable experience and attained new heights of class consciousness the workers' movement was ready to unite its forces on an international basis. The first international proletarian organisation, the Communist League, had ceased to exist after the beginning of the 1850s and was

ill-equipped to become a mass organisation. The time had now come to unite the working masses in a new international organisation.

On September 28, 1864, the International Working Men's Association was founded at a meeting in London attended by workers from Britain, France, Germany, Italy and various other countries. The representative of the German workers on the presidium was Karl Marx, the outstanding leader of the proletariat's liberation struggle. He was entrusted with the drawing up of the *Inaugural Address* and the *General Rules*. He and Frederick Engels were the movement's main political leaders and its outstanding thinkers. Workers who had attained varying levels of class consciousness joined the International and for this reason its programme—the *Inaugural Address*—had to be drawn up in such a way as to be clear and acceptable to all while remaining true to the basic principles of scientific communism. Marx carried out this task with remarkable skill. The *Inaugural Address* described the grim conditions in which workers lived under capitalism and pointed out that for this reason, "the attainment of political power has become the task of first priority before the working class". It was pointed out in the Address that the working class was already large enough to wage a successful struggle, but organisation and experience were no less important than numbers. The *Inaugural Address* also appealed to the workers to oppose wars of conquest and aggression.

At that time no working-class political parties yet existed but many trade unions, co-operatives, workers' education groups and other organisations in various countries of Europe and the United States joined the First International. National branches of the International Working Men's Association were set up in all these countries and within a short period the International had become a broad international proletarian organisation. Its main executive body was its Congress, and during the intervals between congresses the International's activities were presided over by a General Council which sat in London. The political leader of the General Council was Karl Marx, whose writings provided its inspiration.

At the same time Marx was carrying out major theoretical work. In 1867 he completed and published the first volume of *Capital*, on which he had been working for more than twenty years. This work contained a profound analysis of the economic and social aspects of capitalism, and a scientific substantiation of the rise of capitalism and the inevitability of the system's ultimate demise. This great work provided the working class with vital knowledge and a clear guide in its struggle.

While carrying on his theoretical work Marx never abandoned

his daily pursuit of practical revolutionary work in the ranks of the workers' movement. Under his leadership, the General Council became the militant headquarters of the international workers' movement. The International gave active help—both political guidance and material assistance—to the workers' strike movement. At that period large strikes were being organised in a number of countries, such as Britain, Switzerland and Belgium. The help and guidance of the International enabled many workers' strikes to score successes and wrest significant concessions from their employers. This fact served to consolidate and enhance the authority of the International among the proletariat. Events now convinced the workers of how much it was possible for them to attain by striving to put the International's slogan "Workers of the World, Unite!" into practice.

At the congresses of the International the members of the General Council and Marx's friends and followers took pains, citing examples from the day-to-day course of the workers' struggle, to explain the inconsistencies of the petty-bourgeois socialism of Proudhon and Bakunin, who both had a sizable following among French, Spanish, Belgian and various other workers. The Proudhonists and Bakuninists although approaching this problem from their own particular angle, both saw the main force capable of transforming the world to lie not in the working class but in petty proprietors and this misguided thesis provided the basis of their whole policy. In the heated debates which went on at the congress meetings scientific communism gradually came to be accepted in preference to other theories. Both from an ideological and organisational point of view, the First International was to become an increasingly close-knit and influential workers' organisation. The liberation struggle of the working class against the oppressors of the working people had by this time attained impressive new heights.

Chapter Thirteen

THE PARIS COMMUNE—1871

On March 18, 1871, when Paris had already been under siege for six months, as working wives and mothers hurried at dawn to take their places in the queues in front of the few bakeries where there was still bread to be had, shots rang out in Montmartre. They hurried to the scene only to see French soldiers carrying out their officers' orders to take away from the Montmartre hill cannon paid for with funds collected by the Paris workers and guarded by armed workers—members of the National Guard, guns that had defended the city against the Prussian invaders.

The women roused the soldiers of the National Guard to their feet and rallied the townspeople. The people of Paris were bitterly indignant. To try and disarm the National Guard when Paris was surrounded by the Prussians and deprive the city's defenders of their cannon was an open act of national betrayal.

Detachments of the National Guard and the people of Paris took up arms against the government troops. Some of the soldiers refused to shoot at their fellow countrymen and came over on to the people's side, while the remainder were obliged to withdraw. The popular uprising soon spread, involving one district of the city after another. By mid-day it was quite clear that the people had won the day. Louis Adolphe Thiers, then head of the government, fled from the insurgent city in a carriage with curtains drawn across the windows and escorted by mounted police. A red flag was hoisted over the Hôtel de Ville.

The next day, a Sunday, tens of thousands of Parisians from the workers' districts poured out onto the boulevards, squares and streets of the city. Laughter, songs and joyful cries filled the air on that warm, sunny spring day. The people had good reason to celebrate—for the first time they had become masters of their own destiny.

Meanwhile, the western and southern districts of the city that were nearest to Versailles presented a very different picture. They were seething with people, horses and carriages. Great piles of luggage were being roped up and loaded onto carriages bulging with cases, bundles and bags, as the wealthy, the aristocracy, the mounted officers and their unwilling men, all got in each other's way in this panic exodus from the capital.

Soldiers of the National Guard, and the wives and children of the poor laughed heartily to see these fine gentlemen, who but the day before had been as composed and arrogant as ever, hurrying to pack together all their fine clothes before fleeing the city. The workers and their families cheered, glad to see the last of them. Without them Paris was a brighter, healthier place—a new chapter of the city's history had begun and it was the people who were to bring it to fruition. For the first time in history the working class had taken power into its own hands.

The Historical Circumstances Leading Up to the Paris Commune

This victory of the proletariat of Paris in 1871 was not a fortuitous event. Earlier political developments and the workers' experience in the class struggle ever since the Revolution of 1789 had paved the way for this victory.

The industrial proletariat had come into being together with the introduction of machinery in industry and had grown in step with the development of capitalist production. It was their well-nigh intolerable living conditions which led the workers to engage in the class struggle. They received a mere pittance for working as much as 14-16 hours a day, which meant that they and their families were condemned to a life of hunger and constant deprivation. The struggle which the workers had been waging ever since the beginning of the nineteenth century was one they could not help but join—they were unable to reconcile themselves with the monstrous existence which their capitalist masters obliged them to lead. However, the workers at that stage had as yet little experience of the class struggle, they were not clear as to which were the best methods to use to transform the unjust social system which brought them so much suffering. This lack of awareness led them to make many mistakes and suffer frequent defeats.

However, this experience of setbacks and defeats brought in its wake heightened maturity and class consciousness. A great advance had been made from the first spontaneous expressions of class hatred at the beginning of the nineteenth century, when workers vented their blind fury by destroying machines, to the

inauguration of the first international workers' organisation—the First International—in 1864. The revolts of the Lyons weavers in 1831 and 1834, the first mass political movement of the workers—Chartism, the first international proletarian party—the Communist League, the June uprising of 1848, the proletariat's participation in the bourgeois-democratic revolutions of 1848-1849, the strike movement of the 1850s and '60s, the support given by the workers to progressive democratic movements of the period—all represented important stages in the development of the proletariat's class consciousness. All this had helped prepare the international workers' movement to carry out its most important task—the seizure of political power.

As early as the mid-nineteenth century, the great leaders of the working class, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, after setting forth the laws of social development, came to the conclusion in their works that between capitalism and socialism there must be a transitional stage—a dictatorship of the proletariat. This theoretical discovery was of tremendous importance, but neither Marx, Engels or anyone else at the time was clearly aware of what concrete forms this dictatorship would take in practice.

Nor were the French workers, who were destined to set up such a dictatorship for the first time in history. In 1871 the French workers did not take up arms, clearly bent on the establishment of working-class power: the vast majority of them were not as yet acquainted with the writings of Karl Marx, and their struggle was largely spontaneous. After Napoleon III's army had capitulated at Sedan, the Second Empire fell. The revolution of September 4, 1870 was carried out by the working people, but its achievements were turned by the bourgeois political leaders to their own ends. The bourgeoisie seized power and while the Germans continued to advance on the French capital the bourgeois government christened itself the "Government of National Defence".

The situation was extremely grave. Even after the Third Republic had been proclaimed Prussia continued her aggressive war of plunder. Prussian troops occupied the north and north-eastern parts of France, besieged Paris and captured Versailles. On January 18th, the King of Prussia was proclaimed Emperor of Germany there in the Hall of Mirrors.

The French people, determined to put up a fight against the German conquerors, was at first prepared to accept the bourgeois politicians, who headed the "Government of National Defence" such as General Trochu and the lawyer Jules Favre. However, it soon emerged that the new regime led by the "Government of National Defence" was in practice not organising resistance but paving the way for appeasement and negotiations with invaders, since the French bourgeoisie hated and feared the workers more

than the Germans. Behind the backs of the heroic defenders of Paris, the French government pursued a treacherous course of capitulation, and later engaged in secret negotiations with the Germans. The "Government of National Defence" was to show itself to be in reality a government of national betrayal. On January 28, 1871, in defiance of the people, the government concluded an armistice with the Germans in which they agreed to the surrender of Paris and other humiliating conditions.

The working people of Paris had already withstood a six-month siege and were suffering from dire hunger and want. Pigeons, crows, cats and dogs had become regular fare, while people froze in their unheated, unlit houses. Yet despite this suffering and privation, the people was not prepared to surrender.

Realising that the government was about to betray them to the Germans the people of Paris rose up against their rulers on October 31, 1870 and January 22, 1871, in attempts to overthrow the government. These uprisings were both crushed, but the reactionary bourgeois government in its turn found itself by this time no longer in a position to control the armed Parisians. So it then turned for support to German bayonets and on March 1st German troops entered Paris; however, the National Guard and its elected executive—the Central Committee—succeeded in forestalling this attack. It called upon the people of Paris to avoid all contact with the invaders and the streets were soon empty with all the city's houses presenting to the world outside a façade of closed doors and curtained windows. The German troops remained in the city for three days in this atmosphere of silent hatred and then withdrew.

After this criminal betrayal had proved fruitless, the reactionary bourgeoisie made plans for a surprise night attack to disarm Paris' revolutionary forces and capture their cannon. Adolphe Thiers, an inveterate enemy of the working class who had been elected to head the government in February, made preparations to carry out this plan. On the night of March 17th government troops were sent out not against the Germans but against the people of Paris. What this action led to has already been related.

The Revolutionary Government of the National Guard Central Committee

The uprising of March 18th had not been prepared in advance and was to a large degree spontaneous. However, the leadership of the uprising, and later political power, were to be taken over by the Central Committee of the National Guard, which was to become the first revolutionary government of the working class.

The embittered bourgeois politicians protested loudly at the fact that power in Paris was now in the hands of unknown individuals. The names of the members of the National Guard Central Committee were indeed unfamiliar in aristocratic salons and bourgeois drawing rooms; however, they were on the lips of all the inhabitants of the workers' suburbs and the poor districts of the city.

One of the outstanding members of the new government was the book-binder Louis Eugène Varlin (1839-1871), a self-educated man of enormous energy and selfless dedication to the workers' cause, who became one of the organisers of the Paris section of the First International. On March 18th, Varlin took part in the people's battle against the soldiers sent out against them by Thiers, and was to enjoy great authority in the revolutionary government. A foundry worker by the name of Duval (1841-1871) who had taken part in the uprisings of January 22nd and March 18th was first sent to organise the police prefecture, and a few days later was made a general and one of the commanders of the city's armed forces. The 27-year-old medical student Émile Eudes, who had earlier been sentenced to death for his part in the revolutionary movement against the Second Empire, was also made a general by the Central Committee. Despite his youth, the 28-year-old milliner Charles Amour had already amassed considerable experience in revolutionary struggle and legal persecution, and the Central Committee sent him as their representative to Lyons and Marseilles after the victory of the uprising of March 18th. Another member of the Central Committee, Grenier—the owner of a small laundry—was appointed delegate (a post more or less equivalent to that of minister) to the Ministry of the Interior. 28-year-old François Jourde who had long been active in the Paris section of the International was appointed delegate to the Ministry of Finance. The cobbler Edouard Roulier, a veteran of the revolutionary movement who had taken part in the June uprising of 1848, was put in charge of the Ministry of Education.

The Central Committee of the National Guard was as it were a living embodiment of the will of the people of Paris. Side by side with workers were craftsmen, painters and writers, and the Committee presented a representative cross-section of the capital's varied working population, their wide range of skills and pursuits. The lack of political homogeneity was also a faithful reflection of the level of political maturity of the French proletariat of that period—the Committee included Blanquists, Proudhonists, neo-Jacobins and unaligned democrats.

The great achievement of the National Guard Central Committee lay in the fact that once the course of events had made it the leader of the popular revolution, it proved capable of pre-



The Paris Commune is proclaimed in the square outside the Hôtel de Ville. Engraving dated 1871

serving close direct links with the people and implementing its will.

Events themselves led the Central Committee to pursue bold revolutionary policies.

The momentous step with which the revolutionary government began its work was to disband the regular army, which up till then had provided the ruling classes with an instrument of oppression against the working people. In their armed struggle of March 18th, the people of Paris had defeated Thiers' detachments and obliged them to flee. On March 18th and 19th, the police and gendarmerie followed the soldiers' example and also

sought refuge in Versailles. On March 19th, the Central Committee first decreed that the state of siege had been lifted, military tribunals were disbanded and all the soldiers who had stayed behind in the capital were ordered to join the ranks of the National Guard. These were measures deliberately designed to do away with military despotism. After disbanding the regular army and the police, the working-class revolutionary government took steps to ensure that the only armed forces in Paris should be those of the National Guard, i.e., the armed people.

Immediately after the victorious popular uprising the Central Committee of the National Guard was obliged to take action against sabotage on the part of counter-revolutionary government functionaries. After March 19th, the ministries and administrative offices were all completely deserted. Their staff did not turn up at work, in compliance with a directive from Thiers' government now seated at Versailles. However, this mass sabotage did not weaken the workers' resolve. That same day the Central Committee issued an official announcement, declaring that the new government of the republic had taken over control of all ministries and administrative bodies.

Members of the Central Committee—workers, students, journalists, and artisans—were sent to organise the work in the ministries and administrative offices. They naturally lacked experience in state administration, yet they were fired with revolutionary enthusiasm, and were ready to put heart and soul into this new work, and if necessary sacrifice their lives for the people's cause, and these qualities were to more than make up for their lack of experience. Within a short period the revolutionary government supported by the boundless initiative and energy of the people succeeded in organising state institutions founded on new democratic principles and in ensuring their smooth functioning. These measures carried out by the Central Committee of the National Guard dealt a crushing blow at the bourgeois, military-cum-bureaucratic state machinery and laid the foundations of a state of a new type which protected the interests of the oppressed, not those of the oppressors.

The Paris Commune—the First Dictatorship of the Proletariat

The work of the Central Committee was continued and carried a stage further by the Paris Commune. The very day after the successful uprising of March 18th, the Central Committee announced that elections to a Paris Commune would be held. These elections took place on March 26th, while on March 28th, before

a tremendous crowd in the building of the Hôtel de Ville, the inauguration of the Commune was solemnly announced.

The elections to the Commune were carried out according to the principle of universal male suffrage. The Versailles counter-revolutionary government issued an appeal to the people to boycott the elections and the percentage of votes cast in the bourgeois and aristocratic districts was very small. So much the better, since this meant that the Commune was elected mainly by working people. Among the members of the Commune were the most outstanding figures from the Central Committee of the National Guard, such as Varlin, Duval, Jourde, Eudes and Vaillant.

Like the Central Committee of the National Guard, the Commune regarded itself not as a municipal organ of the city of Paris but as the central revolutionary government of the republic.

The Commune therefore proceeded to adopt laws, carrying out the functions of supreme legislative organ. It also supervised the implementation of laws, assuming supreme executive powers. This combination of legislative and executive powers in the one body was one of the remarkable features of the Commune.

The Commune completed the work started by the Central Committee aimed at doing away with the old bourgeois state machinery. The regular army and police had by this time been officially disbanded. The former bureaucratic apparatus, now engaged in sabotage activity, was replaced by new state functionaries from the ranks of the people. The Commune adopted decrees dismissing former members of the bureaucracy who had been receiving extremely high salaries and stipulated a new maximum limit for state functionaries' salaries, aimed at levelling out the average functionary's salary and that of a skilled worker. The Commune also decreed that civil servants should be elected by the people, earn their respect, and that they could be recalled by popular demand at any time.

All these measures introduced by the Central Committee of the National Guard and the Commune served to lay the foundations of a new type of state, which had known no historical precedent.

Meanwhile however, even the workers of Paris and their leaders were only dimly aware of what they were creating. The people and their representatives in the Commune were acting as they felt events dictated, implementing the creative initiative of the popular masses. The direction of this creative activity and its true content were first described by Karl Marx, who pointed out that the Paris Commune of 1871 was indeed an example of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the coming of which he had forecast in his works of 1848-1850.

Of course the dictatorship of the proletariat did not truly come into its own in the Paris Commune. The Commune represented a first attempt to establish such a dictatorship, and its leaders were groping their way as they went and made a number of serious errors. Nevertheless, it served to demonstrate that the proletariat must and could destroy the bourgeois state machinery and replace it with a superior form of state apparatus, thus paving the way for the transition to a superior form of democracy, proletarian democracy in the interests of the majority, in the interests of the people.

The Paris Commune also achieved a great deal in the sphere of social legislation. Despite its short life of a mere 72 days the Commune demonstrated that it was a genuinely democratic government, concerned first and foremost with the welfare of the working people.

The Central Committee introduced important new laws immediately after it came to power. On the very next day after the uprising, on March 19th, an amnesty was decreed for all political prisoners who had been sentenced or arrested by the government of the exploiting classes. A decree was issued banning the sale of articles on pawn and ordering the return to their owners of all articles valued at less than 15 francs. Eviction as a result of tenants' failure to pay their rent was also forbidden. These laws, which were later ratified by the Commune, were all designed to protect the interests of the poor and the working people—likewise the decrees providing for regular salaries to be paid to the soldiers of the National Guard and the allocation of one million francs for distribution in the form of allowances for the poor.

The Paris Commune placed the social legislation of the first revolutionary government on a firmer basis and carried it still further, adopting a number of important new laws. On April 16th, a decree was issued ordering the transfer of all enterprises, abandoned by their owners, into the hands of the workers and producers' associations. This decree possessed a truly socialist character and if the Commune had lasted longer the socialist essence of its policy would no doubt have come still more clearly to the fore.

The Commune also introduced a decree of fundamental importance organising the requisition of all flats deserted by their bourgeois occupants when they fled Paris and their allocation to the defenders of the city, first and foremost to those whose living quarters had been damaged during the fighting. A decree was adopted separating the Church and State. Important measures were introduced to further the education of the masses: the Louvre, the Tuileries and other palaces and museums con-

taining priceless art treasures were opened to the public, and all forms of art and the promotion of school education were given every form of encouragement.

All these measures provided ample proof of the enormous amount a working-class government could accomplish for the welfare of the people. However, alongside these measures which immortalised the Commune's achievement, a number of mistakes were committed which were to prove fatal for the outcome of the struggle against the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie.

The gravest of these mistakes were those made almost immediately after the glorious victory of March 18th. For a start, the Communards did nothing to prevent the troops which remained loyal to Thiers from leaving the city. Still worse, the people of Paris did not carry their victory to its logical conclusion: instead of advancing immediately on Versailles, dealing a crushing blow to Thiers' demoralised troops and fighting on to secure the victory of the revolution throughout the country, the Central Committee of the National Guard adopted a passive stand, preferring to wait and see which way the tide would turn.

This fatal delay enabled the government at Versailles to recover from its initial defeat, confine the revolution to Paris and prepare for a counter-offensive against the city.

Immediately after March 18th, communes were set up in a number of other towns: Lyons, Marseilles, Saint-Etienne, Toulouse, Perpignan, and Creusot. This served to show that the popular uprising which broke out in Paris might well have spread to embrace the whole country. However, the failure of the Communards to grasp the vital need for an extension of the revolutionary struggle outside Paris enabled the bourgeoisie to put down the various isolated centres of revolutionary activity in different parts of the country. By the beginning of April all these localised uprisings in the provinces had been quelled and the bourgeois counter-revolutionary forces were able to concentrate all their efforts against Paris.

By this time Paris was cut off from the rest of the country, which meant that the working class in the capital was unable to set up the all-important alliance with the peasantry. The fact that the leaders of the Commune were aware of the importance of this task is borne out by a number of appeals addressed by the revolutionary government to the peasants. Yet the Communards were in no position to effect such an alliance with the peasantry and make use of its support.

The Communards also pursued a fatally indecisive and half-hearted policy with regard to the Bank of France, the vital nerve of the country's economy. Instead of nationalising the Bank, and thus undermining the economic power of the bourgeoisie, the



The execution of Communards in Paris. Drawing, 1871

Commune merely addressed meek requests to the manager for moderate sums, while Thiers' counter-revolutionary government showed no hesitation in making use of vast sums from the same source.

These mistakes were, of course, not mere coincidences. Crude blunders, mistakes and miscalculations resulted from the insufficient maturity of both the French and the international workers' movement in 1871. At that period capitalism had not yet exhausted its potential, while the workers' movement, although it had already attained a sufficiently high stage of development to become aware of the vital importance and implications of the struggle for political power and its ability to set up a new, better and more just social order, had not yet freed itself from a number of mistaken illusions of the past, had not yet reached a clear understanding of the laws of social development and class struggle. This was what lay behind the Commune's defeat.

After gradually consolidating its military advantage, the Versailles government opened its offensive against Paris in the second half of April. The Communards fought with great heroism, but isolated as they were, they were unable to resist the superior counter-revolutionary forces. Thiers' government was to cover

itself in eternal shame by turning to Bismarck with a request for help in crushing the resistance of the French workers. The German militarists then occupying French territory were only too willing to come to Thiers' support.

On May 10, 1871, a humiliating peace was signed in Frankfurt. Germany wrested two industrially developed provinces from France—Alsace and Lorraine—and demanded a war indemnity of 5,000 million francs. Thiers' government hastened to conclude this crippling peace with the Germans in order to have its hands free to deal with the resistance of the working people at home.

On May 22nd, the troops of the Versailles government made their way into Paris and the "May week" of bloodshed began. The counter-revolutionary forces with their cannon and machine-guns wrought cruel reprisals against the defenders of the Commune, who put up a heroic resistance on the barricades.

By May 28th the battle was over. The bourgeoisie then subjected the defeated workers to reprisals of merciless cruelty. The bourgeois newspapers screamed revenge, and the massacre began. The heroic defenders of the Commune were sent before the firing squad without trial. The exact number of victims has never been established: estimates vary between seventeen and thirty-five thousand. Tens of thousands were arrested and sentenced to hard labour in the ill-famed tropics of New Caledonia.

The Commune had been defeated and its defenders had died heroes' deaths. Yet, although the bourgeois counter-revolution emerged victorious, nothing can detract from the historic achievement of the Paris workers.

The Paris Commune represented a major advance in the world revolutionary movement, demonstrating for all to see that the proletariat's struggle for liberation called for the seizure of political power. Subsequent generations of revolutionaries who carried on the good work begun by the Communards of 1871 were to draw invaluable lessons from both the impressive achievements and the grave mistakes of the Paris Commune.

Chapter Fourteen

THE CAPITALIST WORLD AT THE END OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The Main Features of Economic and Social Development in the Capitalist Countries

The last three decades of the nineteenth century saw the rapid development of capitalism which had by now asserted itself in many more countries (South-East Europe, North and South America, Japan, to a certain extent in China). Capitalist production was making great strides in the leading capitalist countries, towns continued to grow rapidly and communications greatly improved. Momentous changes took place in the course of a single generation.

The end of the nineteenth century came to be known as the "steel age", for metal was coming to take the place of wood on an increasing scale. From 1870 to 1900 steel production multiplied 56 times over! Other branches of metallurgy also advanced rapidly. Technological innovations and growing demand also spurred on the engineering industry. By the end of the century the world's rail network had expanded tremendously, totalling 500,000 miles as opposed to 140,000 miles at the end of 1870. In the nineties, in a number of towns horse-drawn trams were replaced by a new invention—electric trams. Electricity was now made wide use of in industry, transport and communications. At the end of the century the telephone became an everyday amenity just as the electric telegraph had become slightly earlier.

Concentration played an important part in industry, trade and banking by this time. Large enterprises were now ousting medium and small ones in the course of ever livelier competition. During world economic crises, which occurred at regular intervals, approximately once every ten years, large enterprises started "swallowing up" petty producers faced with ruin. In many spheres of economic life powerful firms and monopolies—large banks, trusts and joint-stock companies—grew up. Monopolies of this type

gradually started to play a leading role in their particular spheres of banking and industry.

The capitalist development of the latter part of the nineteenth century was of a relatively "peaceful" variety. No major revolutions or wars on a continental scale took place during its last thirty years. Of course, there were various revolutionary outbreaks among the oppressed peoples and a continuous chain of "little wars", such as the wars of colonial plunder against the peoples of Asia and Africa, but from the Franco-Prussian War and the Paris Commune of 1871 up until the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) and the Russian Revolution of 1905, the world saw no major upheavals. However, contradictions were building up in the capitalist world and their ultimate explosion was inevitable. The economic and political development at this period proceeded at an uneven rate.

The German Bourgeois-Junker Empire

After German unity had been achieved in 1871, the country's economy made rapid headway. The five thousand million francs wrested from France by way of war indemnities after the Franco-Prussian War gave an important stimulus to German industry. By the end of the century German industry had overtaken France's in both its growth rate and level of development and in some spheres had overtaken that of Britain as well. By this time Germany was one of the world's leading industrial powers and in some spheres, such as the chemical industry and electrotechnology led Europe, far outstripping countries where capitalism had taken root much earlier. German agriculture was also rapidly assuming a capitalist character: large Junkers' estates were transformed into regular grain and meat factories.

However all this economic achievement did not imply any social progress. Germany was still one of the few states in Europe which had not experienced a successful popular revolution, and this factor was to leave its mark on the whole of the subsequent development of the country, its people and its national tradition.

The new, semi-absolutist empire was of a distinctly militarist type led by reactionary Prussia and its Hohenzollern rulers. The nobility, Junkers and military had not lost any of their former economic and political privileges, and continued to play the dominant role in the country's affairs.

For twenty years—up until 1890—the German Empire's domestic and foreign policy were in the hands of Chancellor Bismarck. This cunning and unscrupulous politician was eager to promote the interests of the country's thriving capitalism. He built

up the country's military might and by means of complex diplomatic manoeuvres strove to secure for Germany a decisive voice in European affairs. He went all out to consolidate German unity under Prussia and the House of Hohenzollern, and saw the country's most formidable enemy to be one within its borders, namely the working class. Between 1878 and 1890 he applied his Anti-Socialist Law banning the activities of the German Social-Democrats and forcing them to go underground. This however did not daunt the German working class, and the Social-Democrats, led by August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht, closed their ranks and attained a still higher level of political awareness. Contrary to the hopes of the German reactionaries, the party's influence in the country did not decline but grew still more powerful. In 1890 the Anti-Socialist Law was lifted, which implied a serious defeat for Bismarck and a victory for the German working class.

The new emperor, Kaiser Wilhelm II (1888-1918), was determined to have the last say in all state affairs, and Bismarck was left with no choice but to resign from office. In this new reign however, the militarist aspect of German policy showed no signs of abating. The 1890s saw still further progress in German industry. The aspirations of the German capitalists became more ambitious as the country's economic strength came more and more to the fore. The ruling class started talking of a transition to "policies on a world scale" and Germany hastened to join in the race for colonial possessions overseas, and to build up a navy. Wilhelm II was all in favour of this policy of the "mailed fist" and his militaristic empire started making undisguised preparations for a world war.

The Beginning of Britain's Decline

Meanwhile Britain, who had led the rest of the Western world for preceding one and a half centuries was clearly starting to lose her former supremacy during the last thirty years of the nineteenth century.

Britain still possessed an enormous colonial empire which provided her with a source of untold riches and continued to constitute the main pillar of her power. She also possessed the world's largest merchant marine and war fleet and enormous capital resources deployed throughout the world. Yet, at the same time, Britain no longer had the industrial monopoly which she had held on to so successfully up until the earlier part of the nineteenth century. The United States had already overtaken her in volume of industrial output, and Germany was now ahead of her in some spheres, while as far as her rate of industrial growth was con-

cerned, Britain had by now been outstripped by a number of younger capitalist states.

The ruling classes in Britain strove to consolidate their country's position in the world by further extending her colonial empire. At the end of the '70s Britain waged a war of extermination against the Zulus of South Africa, which enabled her to seize large territories. At the same period she also waged a long colonial war against Afghanistan, whose people succeeded in safeguarding their independence. In 1882 Britain occupied Egypt and virtually brought her to her knees. A few years earlier, by means of diplomatic manoeuvres, Britain had succeeded in wresting Cyprus from the Turks, annexing it in 1878. The Sudan was captured in the 1880s, and Burma was annexed on January 1, 1886. The British colonial empire went on extending its frontiers, bringing suffering and hardship to the subject peoples of Africa, Asia and Oceania, who were being bled dry by the British colonialists.

The Irish question was to remain one of the main sources of political controversy throughout this period: the enslaved people of the "Emerald Isle" continued an undaunted struggle against its English oppressors.

During the last third of the nineteenth century political power in Britain fluctuated between two bourgeois parties, the Liberals and the Conservatives. The Liberal leader William Gladstone (1809-1898), four times Prime Minister, was a past master at political compromise and skilful rounding-off of political corners. The Conservative leader Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881) went in more for flamboyant gestures particularly in the sphere of diplomatic intrigues and manoeuvres, and enjoyed playing with fire. In essence, the policies pursued by these two parties had much in common: both the Liberals and the Conservatives defended the interests of the British big bourgeoisie, landowners and colonialists. However, in order to maintain the wealthy classes' domination of the country's affairs at a time when workers and their families constituted the vast majority of the population, both the Liberals and the Conservatives were obliged to gradually introduce a certain number of democratic and social concessions. During the 1870s much important new social legislation was passed: primary education was extended to be made compulsory in 1880, trade unions were legalised, new laws were passed for the protection of child labour, and under the Public Health Act of 1875 public health authorities were set up throughout the country. The Third Reform Bill of 1884 extended suffrage, doubling the male electorate.

These partial concessions which the ruling classes found themselves obliged to make were the indirect result of the political

activity of the British working class. At the end of the last century the trade unions were the main organisations of the British proletariat. Only in the '80s did socialist organisations begin to emerge in the British labour movement, and even these were small and had little influence. In 1893, the Independent Labour Party was set up with Keir Hardie (1856-1915) as its leader. This party put the political struggle of the proletariat before all else, yet it too proved ill-equipped to become a militant revolutionary organisation of the British proletariat.

The British workers of this period organised frequent large-scale strikes, but in the late nineteenth century this strike movement, in comparison with Chartism, was definitely lacking in militant ardour. One of the important reasons for this was the fact that by this time the bourgeoisie had built up for itself a reliable bastion of support in the shape of the "workers' aristocracy", consisting of the better-paid stratum of skilled workers.

Of course, not all sections of the proletariat succumbed to the same extent to the influence of the bourgeoisie, yet in the ranks of the organised workers' movement—the Trade Unions, the Independent Labour Party and the Co-operative Movement—the influence of the bourgeoisie was reflected in opportunist ideology and tactics.

France Under the Third Republic

After the humiliating defeat in the war with Prussia, entailing the loss of the two industrially developed provinces of Alsace and Lorraine and the payment of an enormous (for that period) war indemnity of five thousand million francs, France's economic development suffered a severe setback. More than half the population was still engaged in agriculture. Medium and small enterprises continued to play a large part in industry and it was only in the 1890s that new industries based on the latest technological innovations started to grow up. Concentration was to proceed most rapidly of all in banking: a number of French banks succeeded in gaining control over enormous capital, which however was not fed into economic development. In search of still larger profits the French capitalists preferred to export their capital overseas, above all in the form of government loans. By 1890 French capital exports overseas already totalled 20,000 million. This represented a serious drain on the country's economy and held back its development. At the same time, the capitalists were receiving large dividends. This export of French capital was of a marked usurious character.

After the defeat of the Paris Commune, a wave of harsh reaction set in. Communards were shot, deported to the colonies

or imprisoned, and the military tribunals were not disbanded until 1876. France was officially a republic, but a republic that lacked all semblance of republican principles, a "republic without republicans" or "conservative republic", as it came to be known, which was led by the reactionaries who had drowned the Commune in a bloodbath. It was not until 1875 that a constitution providing the republic's legal foundation was finally adopted by the National Assembly, possessing no legal power and only by a majority of one. In many respects the Third Republic was less democratic than the First or Second.

It was only at the end of the 1870s that the republican order was finally firmly established, after various monarchist conspiracies had been foiled. But even in this "republicans' republic", which was the fruit of the proletariat's and working people's struggle, power was concentrated in the hands of a narrow circle of bourgeois republicans. During the years of struggle after the defeat of the Commune, the leaders of the bourgeois republicans Léon Gambetta (1838-1882) and Jules Ferry (1832-1893) promised the people a broad programme of reforms. Yet once they were in power they only put part of these reforms into practice, administering them in "small doses" spaced out over long intervals. In 1880, an amnesty for the Communards was decreed, and the beginning of the '80s saw the introduction of compulsory primary education, legalisation of the trade unions, and the guaranteeing of freedom of the press. These reforms were significant, but did not go far enough to satisfy the working people. The workers also opposed the policy of colonial annexation, which the bourgeois government encouraged to further its own interests. In 1881 France annexed Tunisia, and after a cruel war lasting from 1883 to 1885 Vietnam was added to the French possessions in Indochina. In the 1880s and 1890s French colonialists seized Madagascar and vast territories in Equatorial and North-West Africa.

In 1879-1880 a Workers' Party was established in France which was headed by the valiant fighters for socialism Jules Guesde (1845-1922) and Paul Lafargue (1842-1911). Guesde and Lafargue were pupils and followers of Marx and turned frequently to him and Engels for advice, and the party's stand was basically Marxist.

Side by side with this party, however, a number of other, non-Marxist parties also emerged in the French labour movement: the Blanquists, the Possibilists (an openly opportunistic party) and the Allemanists. Anarcho-syndicalists enjoyed wide influence in the French trade union movement. This disunity and lack of homogeneity in the French labour movement weakened the position of the proletariat and reduced its ability to influence other sections of the working people.

Making the most of this situation, the ruling circles of the bourgeoisie not only refused to carry out any more reforms but even embarked on a course openly hostile to the forces of democracy. The 1890s saw a rapprochement between the bourgeois republicans and the monarchists. Both groups chose to forget their former differences and extended the olive branch to each other, brought together by their common aims, namely those of opposing democracy in home policy and drawing maximum profits from colonial plunder in foreign policy. Business magnates, the military and the upper clergy gradually closed their ranks in a united reactionary bloc.

The 1890s were distinguished by a tense struggle between the forces of reaction and democracy. Leading French writers fought side by side with the working class in the ranks of the democratic movement: they included such outstanding figures as Émile Zola (1840-1902) and Anatole France (1844-1924). Gradually, in the course of the struggle the forces of democracy began to gain the upper hand, and reaction to make concessions. Yet the French bourgeoisie, which by this time had so much experience behind it, took determined steps to prevent a decisive victory for the Left, and by means of cunning manoeuvring succeeded in bringing about a split in their opponents' ranks. In 1899 a bourgeois government under Waldeck-Rousseau was formed, in which the Socialist Alexandre Millérand was offered a post. His acceptance was approved of by the socialist Right wing but criticised by the Left wing. The resulting confusion in the ranks of the socialist movement undermined the role of the democratic camp as a whole.

Rapid Capitalist Development in the United States

After the end of the Civil War the United States entered a period of rapid economic development. Within a brief period she was to become one of the most economically advanced states in the world. In 1860 the United States had occupied fourth place among the nations in volume of industrial output but by 1894 she already led the world, having left the other capitalist countries far behind. Railways crossed the length and breadth of the country, and enormous cities such as New York, with its population of several million, Chicago, Philadelphia and San Francisco grew up with a speed unlike anything Europe had ever seen. Driving out the Indian tribes from their traditional homelands as they went, the American farmers settled the vast fertile lands of the West. The large open spaces and the shortage of labour encouraged the wide introduction of machinery. The United States

soon attained an unparalleled level of mechanisation in all spheres of production.

The abolition of slavery after the Civil War removed the last major obstacle to all-out capitalist development, and led to unbridled economic expansion. The latter also possessed its negative side. The fierce free-for-all of capitalist competition and the ruthless pursuit of wealth became firmly established patterns of American life. The most rapacious among the money-makers, who were prepared to indulge in any roguery, deception and crime, amassed enormous fortunes. It was by methods such as these that the great American magnates like Vanderbilt, Rockefeller, Morgan and Gould accumulated their wealth. The fine American writers of the period, Mark Twain (1835-1910), Jack London (1876-1916) and O'Henry (1862-1910), exposed this cruel world of violence, deception, crime and the desperate rat-race which had taken shape in the flourishing New World republic.

Another aspect of this rapid development of American capitalism with its concomitant evils was the cruel exploitation and racial discrimination practised against workers of "non-American descent". Immigrant workers and American-born Chinese, Japanese and mestizos from countries of Latin America, and above all Negroes, were subjected to conditions a great deal worse than those the Yankees enjoyed. They did more work for considerably less pay than American workers, and were deprived of elementary human rights. As early as 1881 a law was introduced in Tennessee forbidding Negroes to travel in the same railway coaches as whites. Later discriminatory laws were introduced in other southern states and Negroes were deprived of virtually all political rights and reduced to the status of "second-class" citizens.

In this way the United States of America, the country with the most advanced technology and highest industrial growth rates became a land where lawlessness and barbaric discrimination against a considerable section of the population based exclusively on the colour of one's skin became the order of the day.

Capitalist Development in Japan

The bourgeois revolution, or the Meiji Restoration of 1867-1868, paved the way for comparatively rapid capitalist development in Japan. Feudal disunity and patterns of landownership were now a thing of the past and large-scale enterprises started springing up everywhere. Under pressure from the peasantry, which continued to protest against vestiges of feudal practices, the ruling circles of the country found themselves obliged to introduce a

series of agricultural reforms. A reform introduced in 1872-1873 recognised land tenure as the right of those who in practice owned it, which meant that those whose right of tenure was already hereditary became the owners of the land they worked, while those that rented it on a temporary basis lost their rights to ownership. Mortgaged lands became the property of those who offered mortgages on them. This reform brought important advantages to landowners and rich peasants, merchants and money-lenders to whom the peasants had previously mortgaged their land. The peasantry lost their rights of ownership to about a third of the land they had formerly owned. Common land—including woods, pastures and meadows—was made the property of the Emperor, which made him the most powerful landowner in the country. The owners of small peasant holdings, already up to their eyes in debt and now burdened with increased land taxes, soon found themselves unable to keep the lands they had acquired by the new reform, and became tenant farmers bereft of any property rights. Their lands became the property of the large landowners and rich peasants, on whom they soon became dependent for a livelihood.

This meant that capitalist development was held back in agriculture, which retained a semi-feudal character. It also accounted for comparatively slow capitalist development in industry during the first years after the reform. Yet, as the bourgeoisie came to play a more important role in the country's affairs, the government began to give more active encouragement to industrial enterprise, investing considerable capital in the construction of new factories. In the 1890s the first monopolies appeared in Japan, developing on the basis of trading houses of long standing that had been in existence since feudal times.

Industrial development brought the usual growth of the working class. The first trade unions appeared in Japan at the very end of the nineteenth century. Their emergence was promoted by the Society for the Organisation of Workers' Trade Unions, headed by progressive workers and intellectuals, with Sen Katayama (1859-1933) as president. In 1898 the first May Day demonstration was held in Japan.

In an effort to hold back any further advance of the labour movement, in 1900 the government issued a "Law on the Maintenance of Order", which banned strikes. Faced by police persecution, a number of trade unions curtailed their activity, but 1901 saw a new wave of protest. Progressive intellectuals and leaders of the labour movement such as Katayama, Kotoku and Kawakami came to the conclusion that it was vital to set up a socialist workers' party. The Social-Democratic Party was officially founded on May 20th of that year. The party's programme only

acknowledged legal methods of struggle and regarded the campaign for universal suffrage as its main task. In addition, it called for cuts in the army, dissolution of the Upper Chamber, and general elections. The government immediately declared the party illegal.

Japanese imperialism, from the time it first emerged at the end of the nineteenth century, was of a militaristic feudal character, since the country's monopoly capitalism was still enmeshed in an intricate network of pre-capitalist feudal production relations. Feudal anachronisms in the country's political life were reflected in the tremendous influence exerted by military and landowning circles, various absolutist features, the weakness of the parliamentary system, the predominance of representatives of the military in the state apparatus and in the fact that the masses were deprived of all political rights.

Japanese ruling circles spared no funds for the building up of a well-equipped army. Korea was one of the main targets against which the aggressive plans of the Japanese militarists were spearheaded at this period. With this prey in view, Japan attacked China in 1894 and quickly defeated her giant neighbour. This military success and the large war indemnity China was forced to pay provided a powerful stimulus for capitalist development in Japan. The victory over China also gave rise to an unbridled wave of chauvinistic propaganda. Ruling circles started devising all sorts of plans for colonial expansion, propagating ideas for the creation of a "Great Japanese Empire" including Korea, the north-eastern provinces of China, Mongolia and Eastern Siberia. The Japanese bourgeoisie saw tsarist Russia, which was also aspiring to expansion in China and Korea, as its main rival in the struggle for supremacy in Asia.

Assured of support not only by Britain, with whom Japan had concluded a treaty in 1902, which was spearheaded against Russia, but also by the United States, Japan attacked Russia in 1904. Progressive Japanese workers like their Russian counterparts were well aware that this war was being fought to promote the interests of the bourgeoisie while it was destined to bring nothing but hardship and privation to the working people of both countries. At a congress of the Second International held in Amsterdam in August 1904, Plekhanov and Katayama greeted each other as friends. However, the workers' organisations were not strong enough at that time to bring any pressure to bear on the respective governments, and the war went on. Russia suffered humiliating defeat in this war against the Japanese militarists. In order to quell the revolution at home and maintain internal order at all costs, the tsarist government was obliged to conclude the Treaty of Portsmouth in 1905, which granted the Japanese considerable

concessions. Southern Sakhalin was ceded to Japan; as a result, Russia was deprived of her only Pacific port. Communications with the Russian territories, Kamchatka and Chukotka, also came under Japanese control.

The Treaty of Portsmouth substantially altered the balance of power in the Far East for some time to come. Japan was now acknowledged as a Great Power. Yet the treaty did not satisfy the appetites of the Japanese militarists, or dampen the aggressive mood of the landowners and the bourgeoisie. In 1906 the Japanese militarists persuaded the government to adopt a more ambitious programme for enlarging the army and navy.

After the Russo-Japanese War the Japanese bourgeoisie, whose power had been consolidated as a result of the victory, promoted rapid development of the country's economy and especially industry. Between 1905 and 1913, 3,800 million yen were invested in the economy, 46.8 per cent of this sum being spent on industrial development. This investment soon reaped impressive results: pig iron production increased from 145,000 tons in 1906 to 243,000 tons in 1913, steel production over the same period rose from 69,000 tons to 255,000 tons and the power industry developed apace to supply the necessary energy for the country's rapid industrialisation. Concentration of production and capital made rapid strides at this time and the country's economy came to be dominated more and more by powerful concerns such as Mitsui, Mitsubishi, Sumitomo and Yasuda. The volume of Japan's foreign trade also rose impressively from 606 million yen's worth of goods in 1903 to 1,361 million yen's worth in 1913.

By this time Japan's rate of economic growth had overtaken that of many of the other capitalist countries. Exploitation and plunder of the peoples of Korea and Southern Manchuria and of the local peasantry and workers made possible this rapid development of Japan's capitalist economy. Apart from workers employed at state enterprises (each of which employed less than 10 workers), Japan's industrial labour force rose from 526,000 in 1904 to 916,000 in 1913.

The Russian revolution of 1905 was to have important repercussions in Japan. On September 5, a mass meeting was held in Tokyo and major skirmishes took place between the police and the crowd. This meeting was followed by a wave of workers' protests in the months and years that followed. In 1906 railway workers, miners and workers from the arsenals of Kure and Tokyo, tramdrivers and conductors in Tokyo, Osaka and Kobe and other towns came out on strike.

The socialist movement also grew more active. In February 1906, the socialist party was restored and was now led by Katayama, Sakai, Nishikawa and Mori. The party founded the news-

paper *Hikari* (Light) replaced in 1907 by *Heimin Shimbun* (The People's Newspaper). The party organised a number of mass meetings and demonstrations. In February 1907 the party was banned and shortly after *Heimin Shimbun* was closed down.

In July 1908 a government came to power that was led by Katsura and worked in direct collaboration with the military. The formation of this new government marked the beginning of a wave of cruel police persecution against the progressive leaders of the labour movement. In 1910 a charge was trumped up against one of the leaders of the socialist party, Kotoku, and 24 of his followers. Twelve of the defendants were executed including Kotoku, and the remainder were sentenced to hard labour. Despite these reprisals, on December 11 of that year a large strike of the Tokyo transport workers was organised by Sen Katayama.

Japan continued all this while to build up her army, improve its equipment and to strengthen its hold in the Far East. In 1910 the Japanese government forced the Korean King to abdicate in favour of the Emperor of Japan. On August 22, 1910, this act was formally ratified in a treaty which made Korea a Japanese colony. Active expansion on the part of the Japanese in Asia led to strained relations between Japan and the United States.

The Foreign Policy of the Great Powers

At the end of the nineteenth century the leaders of the Great Powers were eager to talk about peace. Their utterances at that period were enough to create the impression that a new era in relations between the Great Powers was about to dawn, when war would be condemned and paths to peaceful agreements would be sought. In actual fact, however, appearances were never more deceptive. All the fine talk about peace was merely a mask for active preparations for war. The contradictions between the Great Powers, far from diminishing, were steadily increasing. By the end of the century, all the Great Powers were pursuing a policy of active colonial annexation. Britain and France were competing with each other in their efforts to gain control of Egypt and in the plunder of South-East Asia, North-West and Equatorial Africa, while Britain and Russia had crossed swords in Central Asia. German colonial seizures in Africa and Asia had aroused displeasure among the "club" of established colonial powers. A keen struggle was being waged between Britain and the United States for domination in Latin America. The fight for the largest share in the colonial plunder gave rise to incessant conflict.

Relations between the Powers also deteriorated as a result of conflicting interests in Europe. The Treaty of Frankfurt of 1871

which had bereft France of Alsace and Lorraine had sown seeds of bitter antagonism between France and Germany. Fearing France's thirst for revenge and her efforts to find allies, Germany, who by this time had overtaken France in the arms race, deliberately provoked various diplomatic incidents. Bismarck and the German military sought to deliver another crushing blow at France before she gained new allies and was ready to declare war again. Russia, who saw in France a natural counterweight to the alarming growth of German military might, sought to obstruct the plans of the German militarists for a new war against France.

In 1877 a war broke out between Russia and Turkey, which resulted in the liberation of Bulgaria from Turkish rule. This war also contributed to the growing tension between the Great Powers, in particular between Russia and Britain and Russia and Austria-Hungary. At the Congress of Berlin held in 1878, because of the positions adopted by Britain and Austria-Hungary supported by Germany, Russia found herself obliged to renounce many of her claims. As a result Austria-Hungary took advantage of the situation to occupy Bosnia and Herzegovina, while Britain made off with Cyprus.

The Creation of Armed Camps

In this new situation Bismarck hastened to conclude a military-political alliance with Austria-Hungary (October 7, 1879). The Dual Alliance, as it is known, was directed against Russia and France. In May 1882, the Dual Alliance became the Triple Alliance, when, making capital out of the indignation of the Italian bourgeoisie at France's seizure of Tunisia, German diplomats succeeded in persuading Italy to join. This Triple Alliance was the first military-political bloc to be set up in Europe. Although its initiators referred to it as "The Peace League" in practice it was an aggressive military grouping led by Germany and set up in order to promote the latter's aspirations to European and world domination.

As an answer to the Triple Alliance, between 1891 and 1893 an alliance between Russia and France was negotiated, which meant that Europe was now divided into two large hostile camps. For a time Britain was content to remain aloof from these two groupings, hoping to exploit the differences between the two to further her own ends. Soon however, the rivalry between Britain and Germany for world domination was to emerge as one of the major issues in international politics.

The Mounting Tide of Militarism

The end of the nineteenth century, although it was to see no wars in Europe, was marked by a sharp acceleration of the arms race. The Great Powers vied with one another on the size of their military budgets, military and naval construction and the expansion of their armed forces. In most of these countries voluntary systems of recruitment were replaced by compulsory military service, and there was wide-scale modernisation of military equipment. Britain and Germany, and to a lesser extent Russia, France, Japan, Italy and the United States, were building up their fleets, on which great hopes were pinned in the days before the aeroplane came on the scene. The conclusion of the two military alliances served to accelerate the arms race still further and both camps started openly preparing for war.

The Mounting Class Struggle in the Capitalist Countries

Although no major revolutionary upheavals had taken place in Europe since the Paris Commune, class contradictions far from decreasing had grown much deeper by the turn of the century.

In the course of a long and tenacious struggle the working class had succeeded in wresting a number of concessions from the bourgeoisie. The working day was shortened and some improvements in working conditions and wage increases were introduced. These measures were not sufficient to satisfy the workers, whose living conditions in most capitalist countries were as hard as before. Working days were anything between 10 and 14 hours and in some branches of industry still longer, while a large number of production processes were intensified. Crises and growing unemployment robbed workers and their families of all sense of security, they were obliged to live from one day to the next with the constant threat of unemployment and hunger hanging over them. The rapid growth of the urban population at this period brought in its wake higher rents and led to an increase in food prices and the cost of living in general, thus rendering hard-won wage increases valueless. With the exception of the privileged sector of skilled workers, the real wages of the great mass of industrial workers grew smaller rather than larger towards the end of the century. The proletariat protested against this state of affairs by means of strikes, unemployment marches and political demonstrations. Large strikes swept Britain, the United States, France, Germany and Italy at various junctures during this period, in particular during the 1880s.

The rapid growth of large-scale industry led to the ruin of petty producers who found themselves unable to compete with



British troops in Alexandria. Engraving, 1882

their powerful rivals. Craftsmen, artisans and small traders floundered and went bankrupt. A process of stratification was to be observed in the ranks of the peasantry. The numerically small stratum of rich peasants held their own and prospered, while the chronic agrarian crisis at the end of the nineteenth century brought severe privations to almost all other groups of the peasantry.

Meanwhile the national liberation movements of the oppressed peoples also grew more active, not only in the countries of Asia and Africa, where a new chapter in the liberation movement had begun, but also in the developed capitalist countries. The Poles struggled against tsarist Russia, the Kaiser's Germany and Austria-Hungary in order to restore their national independence. The

Irish were still stubbornly insisting on home rule. The Negroes in the United States, who were treated as social outcasts, sought means of gaining their due social rights. The Finns also started to fight for their national independence. Hungarians, Czechs and Yugoslavs were still languishing under the yoke of the Hapsburgs.

Important bourgeois-democratic reforms were long overdue in a number of capitalist countries. The majority of European states at this time were still monarchies and semi-absolutist regimes continued to flourish in Germany and Austria-Hungary. Nowhere in the world had women yet succeeded in gaining political rights and in the majority of the capitalist countries there still existed property and other franchise qualifications; the vast mass of the working people were still without the right to vote.

The class struggle of the working people, the national liberation movements of the subject nations and the campaign for democratic freedoms all made up a common tide of opposition which served to deepen class antagonisms. The class contradictions which were rapidly accumulating at this period were clearly about to explode to the surface.

The Founding of Workers' Parties. The Second International

The main organising force that united the ranks of the underprivileged and discontent was the working class. During the last three decades of the nineteenth century the proletariat attained a new maturity, which found expression in the creation of new, workers' parties.

In 1883 the great leader and teacher of the working class, Karl Marx, died. Yet the revolutionary teaching which he had bequeathed the working people—Marxism—continued to gain more and more followers: it gradually superseded the naive Utopian teachings that had preceded it and was to become the main ideology of the working class.

The workers' parties which came into being during the 1870s and '80s were in the main Marxist parties. In 1875 the Socialist Workers' Party of Germany was set up, and in 1877 the Socialist Labour Party of America; in 1879-1880 the French Workers' Party was set up and in 1883 the Emancipation of Labour Group in Russia; in 1888 a Social-Democratic Party was founded in Austria, in 1889 in Switzerland and Sweden and in 1891 in Bulgaria. The founding of these workers' parties marked an important step forward in the development of the organised labour movement.

Now that many countries already possessed their own independent workers' parties, naturally the question arose as to how

best to unite them on an international footing so that they could fight for the common cause more effectively. On July 14th, 1889, on the centenary of the French Revolution the Inaugural Congress of the Second International was opened in Paris. An important role in the preparation and creation of the Second International was played by Marx's friend and associate, Frederick Engels.

In the early years of its activity, the Second International remained a basically proletarian organisation, upholding in the main Marxist positions, although opportunist tendencies were to be observed in some of the Social-Democratic parties and the International as a whole from the very outset. At this early stage the Second International accomplished a great deal that was extremely positive. At its first congress in 1889 a resolution was adopted to have May 1st celebrated as International Labour Day by the workers of all countries to demonstrate their proletarian solidarity.

Means of combating militarism and preventing war were discussed in detail at the congresses of the Second International. In its resolutions, the International branded the militaristic policies pursued by the governments of the capitalist world and called upon socialists to vote against war credits in parliament and to carry on a consistent campaign against the bourgeois social order. The fight against militarism and war was now regarded as one of the working class's main tasks.

The Second International did some very useful work in its discussion and elaboration of tactics to be pursued by the proletariat and of whether or not socialists should use the legal parliamentary platform to promote their cause and their role in the trade unions. It was vital for the proletarian parties to have a competent grasp of the intricate art of political struggle, master the methods necessary in legal political campaigning during "peace" time, in order to make adequate preparations for the major class battles that were already imminent. At this stage, however, there were already misguided voices to be heard in the International's ranks, and sometimes unfortunate decisions were adopted. This could all be traced to the rising opportunist tendencies that were taking shape in the labour movement. The bourgeoisie was going all out to split the working class, buying the support of the industrial "aristocracy" and driving a wedge between it and the main body of the proletarian movement. At the turn of the century it was the "workers' aristocracy" that constituted the main bastion of opportunism and reformism in the labour movement. Yet the International succeeded in carrying out its most important task despite this friction: it played an important part in the preparation of the proletariat and its parties for the imminent class battles of decisive importance.

Chapter Fifteen

RUSSIA AFTER THE ABOLITION OF SERFDOM—FROM REFORM TO REVOLUTION

The Development of Capitalism in Russia

The years that elapsed between the abolition of serfdom (1861) and the first Russian revolution of 1905 were described by Lenin as the "watershed of Russian history".

This period was marked by the disappearance of the age-old feudal traditions which had characterised Russia before the great reform, and the emergence of new social patterns typical of bourgeois society. After the abolition of serfdom large factories sprang up in many parts of the country. Within the space of twenty years mechanised labour had already ousted manual labour throughout most of Russian industry.

New industrial centres, apart from Moscow and the Urals, appeared on the map. Coal mining was developed on a large scale in the Donbas, and iron mining in the Krivoi Rog district. In the once barren steppe-lands of the southern Ukraine big metallurgical plants were built around which large towns grew up, such as Yuzovka (since renamed Donetsk), originally nothing but a small workers' settlement for one of these plants in the steppes near the Sea of Azov. Old coastal towns such as Taganrog, Mariupol (since renamed Zhdanov) and Odessa also changed beyond recognition. By 1900 the industrial centres of the South already gave Russia more than half its pig iron, relegating the Urals, the original home of this industry, to second place.

Russia was the largest country in the world. In the middle of the nineteenth century the Russian Empire occupied a ninth of the land area of the globe. This vast country possessed untold natural resources which owing to serfdom had remained unexploited. After the reform of 1861 thousands of miles of railways were built linking the central regions of the country with the remote borderlands, giving Russian industry easy access to the

mineral riches of the Caucasus, Kazakhstan and Siberia. Baku in Azerbaijan became a major oil centre, and later further oil-fields were developed around Grozny in the North Caucasus. Copper mines were opened in Jezkazgan (Kazakhstan) where there were rich untouched deposits. Coal mining was also developed on a large scale in the Kuznetsk basin in Siberia.

Russia's fuel and mineral resources were boundless. In 1860 the population was about one-quarter of the European total, by 1900 almost a third. This represented a population increase of 80 per cent (from 74 to 133 million) for the 40 years from 1860 to 1900. Russian capitalists at that period had an unlimited reserve of labour at their disposal—millions of peasants, who either owned extremely small plots or who owned no land at all, were prepared to work on any terms. Last but not least, nascent Russian capitalism was able to turn to the industrial experience already amassed by the advanced capitalist countries of the West and learn a great deal from their achievements.

From 1860 to 1900 industrial output went up more than 7 times while the equivalent figures for France and Britain were $2\frac{1}{2}$ and just over 2 respectively. Russian pig iron output trebled in the course of a mere ten years (1886-1896). To achieve a similar rise France required 28 years, the United States 23 and Britain 22.

The scale of concentration in industry was also greater in Russia than in the West. By 1890 almost half the total industrial labour force was employed at large factories with 500 men and over.

Yet as far as per capita production was concerned Russia still remained a long way behind the advanced capitalist countries. Britain produced roughly five times more pig iron a year per capita than Russia.

The Survival of Feudal Practices in Rural Life

Industrial development and urban expansion increased the demand for raw materials and foodstuffs. As a result agriculture and livestock-breeding were to assume an increasingly commercial character after the 1861 reform: more and more food was produced for marketing purposes.

Poverty and land hunger drove the Russian peasants from the central regions of the country to the South and East. This migration led to the cultivation of extensive virgin lands in the Ukraine, the North Caucasus, on the East bank of the Volga and in Siberia. The native population of these regions, under the influence of the new Russian settlers also started to sow more cereals.

In a number of remote regions of the Asian part of the country, where the local tribes of hunters and herdsmen had no experience of arable farming Russian peasants carried out pioneer work in the cultivation of these new lands.

The reform of 1861 had failed to do away with a good number of feudal practices in Russian rural life, and the most important of these was the continued existence of large landed estates. After the abolition of serfdom some landowners, in particular in western and southern regions, attempted to adapt themselves to the new economic relations which took shape as a result of the reform. They purchased machines, hired workers and started introducing capitalist methods of farming on their estates, transforming them into meat and grain factories. The majority of the landowners, however, especially those in Central Russia, showed no desire to renounce the advantages which went with their privileged position as owners of large landed estates. They preferred to hire out part of their land in small plots to land-hungry peasants on condition that the latter worked the remainder of their land for no remuneration or paid them half of their annual crop. This system of land tenure was very similar to that which had existed prior to the reform, when the peasants had paid fixed rents for the land they were allowed to work and performed specific labour services in return for it.

Since the labour of those peasants who rented part of their land cost the landowners nothing, they saw no reason to purchase expensive machinery and introduce more up-to-date farming methods. The peasants themselves did not have the sufficient funds to do so, being in dire straits as a result of the crippling land rent and taxes they had to pay.

As a rule the corn which the peasants still had at their disposal once they had settled accounts with their masters proved insufficient to provide them with a living until the next harvest, and they and their families were reduced to a life of semi-starvation. Children were frequently struck down by disease. Typhus, cholera and dysentery epidemics were frequent occurrences in the rural Russia of those days.

Having so little money, peasants were unable to buy many manufactured goods. Since it was after all the peasantry that made up the bulk of the population, the low purchasing power of the peasant masses served to hold back the growth of the country's domestic market. Thus vestiges of feudal practices in agriculture acted as a brake on economic progress in rural areas and in industry as well, hindering capitalist development in Russia.

This is of course not to imply that all Russian peasants were exposed to equally hard conditions. Even before the reform rich

and poor peasants had lived and worked alongside each other, and after 1861 as commerce came to exert a greater influence on patterns of agriculture, the impoverishment of the vast mass of the peasants and the emergence of nuclei of rich peasants proceeded much more rapidly. The rich peasants who exploited hired workers came to constitute a new capitalist class, while the poor peasants whose tiny plots were not enough to feed themselves and their families were obliged to hire out their services. The poor peasants virtually ceased to be peasants in the true sense of the word, but rather agricultural labourers with individual allotments.

The old patriarchal way of life in rural Russia was disappearing fast. New groups with conflicting interests started to emerge in the Russian villages, and soon we find side by side an agricultural bourgeoisie and an agricultural proletariat. The number of the middle peasants decreased considerably. Confronted with ruin, the majority of them joined either the ranks of the urban proletariat or the hired labourers in the villages. Only a small number of this stratum of the peasantry succeeded in withstanding the fierce competition in the post-reform agricultural scene.

The Evolution of the Industrial Proletariat

The growth of capitalist industry in Russia led to an increase in the number of hired workers, who made a break with agriculture and small-scale craft industry to come and work in the country's large industrial enterprises. Gradually, a powerful new industrial proletariat emerged which was destined to play the leading role in the revolutionary transformation of society.

A distinctive feature of the emergence of the industrial proletariat in Russia was the mass migration of the peasants to the industrial centres: as former patterns of rural life disintegrated, they flocked to the towns in search of work. Ruined craftsmen also joined the ranks of the industrial proletariat, but the vast majority of factory workers were former peasants.

While these new workers were now cut off from their former village homes, they kept in contact with their relations who had stayed behind in the villages. This close contact between workers and peasants was an important factor in shaping the deployment of class forces in the Russia of that time. It made possible the subsequent forging of a close-knit alliance between the working class and the peasantry.

In no other European country was the working class subjected to such inhuman conditions as in Russia. Nowhere in Europe did the workers have such few rights or find it so difficult to legally

unite their forces in the struggle against the capitalists. In these intolerable working and living conditions, class consciousness and revolutionary fervour were soon to grow up in the ranks of the working class. The concentration of the country's industrial proletariat in large-scale enterprises enabled the workers to put up a particularly stubborn and staunch resistance to capitalist exploitation.

The Russian working class, closely linked as it was with the peasantry, was clearly destined to be a mighty ally and leader of the Russian peasantry. Russian industry was concentrated in the main in the central part of the country—in and around St. Petersburg, Moscow, Ivanovo and Tula. Yet when new industrial centres were opened up in the South and East of the country, Russian workers followed in the peasants' footsteps in their exodus to the outlying parts of the country.

Groups of industrial workers from among the local inhabitants of these regions also emerged, and as a result of close contact with the Russian workers soon came under their ideological influence. The proletariat of the Ukraine was made up of both Ukrainian and Russian former poor peasants. A large number of Russian workers were to be found in the ranks of the proletariat in the Baltic provinces, Byelorussia, the Caucasus and Central Asia. Such a situation was peculiar to the Russian Empire. There were no British workers in India or Dutch workers in Indonesia. In not one of the colonial empires did the proletariat of the mother country play such an important organisational role and exert such a wide influence on the liberation movement of the subject peoples as did the Russian proletariat in the peripheral regions of the Russian Empire.

The involvement of workers from the national minorities in the revolutionary struggle of the Russian proletariat was the vital condition for the creation of a united front of the peoples of Russia against tsarist colonialism and their inevitable national liberation as a result of the victorious Russian Revolution of 1917.

State Capitalism in Russia

After the reform of 1861, capitalist developments were not only to be observed in the lower echelons of society but also in the subsequent policy of the tsarist government and the measures it introduced from above. The tsarist government had always striven to retain the political domination of the privileged nobility and gentry and to consolidate the empire's economic and military might by improving communications and encouraging the construction of mines and factories. At this particular period it was

important for the government to encourage the concentration of capital and channel it into those sectors of the economy in whose development it had a vested interest.

While protecting local industry from foreign competition by means of high tariff barriers, the government played an active role in the country's economic life, placing large orders with the owners of big factories at advantageous prices, and at the same time allocating large sums to railway expansion. The State Bank granted loans running into millions to the powerful capitalists on very favourable terms. Individual capitalists soon owed the State Bank as much as five million rubles.

The state treasury had controlled an important state sector in the country's economy even before the reform of 1861, being the owner of large tracts of land and forests, mines and factories. After 1861, the state sector was also to assume a capitalist character. In addition, the tsarist government started to build railways at its own expense or buy up parts of the country's railways that were private property. By 1894 more than half the country's rail network was in the hands of the state. At the same time the state also acquired from private entrepreneurs various large railway engineering works and arms factories.

Many civil servants and even ministers bought shares in capitalist enterprises. Since they thus had a personal interest in the profits of such enterprises they spared no effort to ensure them advantageous orders and long-term loans. Via these civil servants powerful capitalists were able to exert a definite influence on the policies pursued by the tsarist government.

In order to accelerate industrial development the tsarist government later permitted the import of foreign capital, which proved a highly profitable undertaking for the foreign financiers who took advantage of this new concession. By the end of the nineteenth century this had led to French, Belgian, German, British and other takeovers of large industrial enterprises, in particular in the Russian mining and metallurgical industries.

These measures designed to promote industrial expansion did further capitalist development in Russia. Yet, at the same time, the introduction of capitalism "from above" blunted the initiative of the Russian bourgeoisie, which had grown accustomed to sops from the government. Besides, as a result of wide-scale investment from abroad, a significant part of industrial profits was leaving the country. The income derived from state factories and railways was spent by the tsarist government on undertakings which had little in common with the vital needs of the Russian people.

Russian Culture at the End of the Nineteenth Century

The end of the nineteenth century saw a great flowering of literature, art and science in Russia. The writings of Lev Tolstoi (1828-1910) were to make a tremendous impact on men of all nations. The works of Fyodor Dostoyevsky (1821-1881), Ivan Turgenev (1818-1883) and Anton Chekhov (1860-1904) were to become famous throughout the world. At this period Russia also gave the world the great music of Tchaikovsky (1840-1893), Moussorgsky (1839-1881), Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908), and Borodin (1833-1887). The canvasses of realist artists such as Perov (1833-1882), Kramskoy (1837-1887) and Repin (1844-1930) were to exert a powerful social influence on the men of their times.

Leading lights in the sphere of the natural sciences at this time included Dmitry Mendeleev (1834-1907) who devised the Periodic Table of the Elements, the outstanding physicist Stoletov (1839-1896), and the talented biologists Mechnikov (1845-1916) and Timiryazev (1843-1920).

The Populist Movement

Peasant uprisings were still common occurrences even after the abolition of serfdom. Peasants now protested against the conditions resulting from this reform which in practice served the interests of the landowners. They were not prepared to reconcile themselves with the curtailment of their holdings and demanded the return of those lands which had been taken away from them and handed over to the gentry, and the liquidation of the completely unfeasible redemption payments. Peasant unrest kept flaring up and then dying down again all over the country as the people fought against obsolete feudal practices.

The progressive Russian intelligentsia showed deep sympathy for the propertyless peasantry. Many of them were convinced that it would be but a simple task to rally together millions of peasants in a united uprising across the whole of Russia, do away with exploitation and ensure the people a life of happiness and freedom. Following in the footsteps of Chernyshevsky and Herzen, the new generation of the democratic Russian intelligentsia imagined that communes joined by all the inhabitants of each village would provide the nuclei of a socialist society in which the peasants would start living and working collectively. It was beliefs such as these that gave rise to the idea that an immediate transition could be made to socialism, by-passing capitalism, and also to a serious underestimation of the vital importance of seizing political power.

Meanwhile, the peasants, whose class and social consciousness were not at all developed, were not ready as yet for concerted action. There was no equality in rural communities and the interests of the impecunious masses had nothing in common with those of the peasants who lived well on the fat of the land. The working peasants' only path to freedom from exploitation was to be found in an alliance with the industrial proletariat in a joint struggle led by the latter.

A number of Russian revolutionaries were by now already familiar with the works of Marx and Engels. While living abroad they had had the chance to observe the rise of the labour movement in the countries of Western Europe and some of them had been eye-witnesses of the proletariat's revolutionary battles, or even participated in them. In 1870 a group of Russian revolutionaries in exile in Switzerland had set themselves up as the Russian section of the First International. That same year the Russian revolutionary Herman Lopatin (1845-1918) was elected to the General Council of the International. With the help of his friends Lopatin translated the first volume of *Capital* into Russian. This work has since been translated into an enormous number of languages, but this Russian edition was the first translation to appear. Of this intelligent, bold and active revolutionary Marx had written: "There are few people I like and admire as much."

In 1871, at the instance of Marx, the General Council of the International, then in London, sent the Russian revolutionary Yelizaveta Dmitriyeva as its official representative to the Paris Commune. She succeeded in making her way to the besieged city and was to take an active part in the work of the Commune.

Yet despite their knowledge of the activity and works of Marx and Engels, the Russian revolutionaries of this period had not yet fully accepted the ideas of revolutionary Marxism. The main reason for this was Russia's backwardness: capitalist development was still at a very early stage and the industrial proletariat had only just come into being. Thus it was quite natural that many members of the Russian intelligentsia were still not in a position to appreciate the historical role of the working class and still persisted in their mistaken view that the main revolutionary force in Russia was the peasantry.

In 1874, about a thousand young Russians dressed in peasant attire set out for the villages—some in the hope of stirring up the peasants to revolt and organising a nation-wide uprising and others in order to propagate socialist ideas. This new offensive on the part of Russia's revolutionary youth came to be known as the "going among the people". Later those who had taken part in it and their sympathisers were known as *Narodniki* (from the word *narod* meaning people) or the Populists.

The Populists and Their Fight Against Tsarist Rule

The peasants did not respond to the appeals of the *Narodniki*. They were not ready for an organised nation-wide uprising, and still less so for the adoption of socialist ideas. After this failure, some of the *Narodniki* lost heart and abandoned the movement while others decided to continue their propaganda work, setting themselves up as craftsmen, small traders or doctors' assistants in rural areas for considerable periods. Realising the need to unite their efforts, these young revolutionaries set up a secret organisation known as *Zemlya i Volya* (Land and Freedom). They organised a clandestine printing press to publish their illegal journal which exposed the tsarist government's policies as being quite incompatible with the interests of the people.

Soon however many of the *Narodniki* were to lose faith in the effectiveness of their propaganda work in the villages. The most active among them who had failed to adopt correct tactics in their struggle were to advocate conspiracy against the tsarist government, regarding political assassination as the supreme method of struggle. They believed that the murder of a group of tsarist ministers and the Tsar himself would suffice to arouse panic in Russia's ruling circles, after which seizure of state power would no longer present much difficulty. The *Narodniki*'s decision to embark on a path of political struggle was absolutely justified, but the type of political struggle which they chose was wrong. The idea that a number of terroristic acts and the assassination of various high-ranking officials would make it possible to change the state political structure was utterly groundless, as was to be borne out by subsequent events.

In 1879, the *Narodnik* terrorists set up a new secret organisation called *Narodnaya Volya* (The People's Will). It was led by experienced revolutionaries including Andrei Zhelyabov, Sofia Perovskaya and Alexander Mikhailov. The members of this new organisation devoted their boundless energy and all their talent and knowledge to the performance of terrorist acts. They succeeded in assassinating a number of high-ranking state officials and then pronounced the death sentence on the Tsar himself. From that moment onwards, for a whole one and a half years Alexander II had a constant threat of death hanging over him. He was shot at when he went out for walks, mines were placed in royal trains and dynamite was even exploded on one occasion under the very dining room of his palace in the centre of St. Petersburg. The sympathies of progressives the world over were on the side of these valiant opponents of tsarist despotism, although by no means all of them approved of the *Narodniki* programme and tactics.

Finally on March 1, 1881, plans were made to assassinate the Tsar as he rode down one of the streets of St. Petersburg. The first bomb that was thrown at his coach blew it up and the second thrown by Ignaty Grinevitsky fatally wounded both the Tsar and his assassin. Both of them died within a few hours. The Tsar's son and heir Alexander III left the capital for the royal palace of Gatchina outside St. Petersburg and surrounded himself with armed guards and police. Outside Russia the new Tsar was ironically referred to as "the prisoner of Gatchina".

However, the political regime that held sway in Russia did not change. The tsarist government continued to pursue its former policies and merely took more active steps to repress revolutionary elements than before. It was in vain that the executive committee of Narodnaya Volya sent an appeal to the Tsar asking for an amnesty and a convocation of the people's representatives in return for which they promised to put an end to their terrorist activity. The Tsar remained deaf to their entreaty, while the police subjected the revolutionaries to savage persecution. Soon all the main leaders of Narodnaya Volya were arrested and thrown into prison. Four of them were hanged and the remainder were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. By this time the organisation had collapsed completely and attempts to revive it proved unsuccessful. Lenin's elder brother Alexander Ulyanov was to pay with his life for his participation in a subsequent attempt on the life of the new Tsar. He was arrested and executed before the plan came to fruition.

The fate of the Narodnaya Volya organisation and its members demonstrated that personal courage and determination were not enough to secure the success of a revolutionary organisation. Revolutionary theory showing the correct path to victory was essential, and the *Narodniki* had no such theory. Conspiracy and isolated assassinations were not destined to achieve revolutionary success.

The First Workers' Organisations

In the years when the *Narodniki* were spreading their propaganda in the villages, mass protest of the industrial workers was gathering momentum.

Government officials and the police went all out to protect the interests of the capitalists, and the workers at this time were bereft of political rights. Any move of protest on their part against their employers was regarded by the police and the tsarist authorities as "insubordination" or "rebellion". Strikes were considered as crimes against the state: strike leaders were arrested,

participants were dismissed from their jobs and literally thrown off the factory premises.

Nevertheless, the number of strikes in Russia continued to grow together with a sense of the need for workers' unity.

Against this background of growing industrial unrest, in 1875 two secret organisations were set up—the South-Russian Workers' Union in the port of Odessa and the North-Russian Workers' Union in St. Petersburg. The first of these was organised by a *Narodnik* intellectual, Yevgeny Zaslavsky, and the second by two workers, the fitter Victor Obnorsky and the joiner Stepan Khalturin. The latter were representatives of that section of the progressive proletariat which did not approve of the *Narodniki* programme and tactics and who were eager to seek new forms of struggle. Obnorsky was widely read and had been abroad three times: he had had the opportunity to study the experience of workers' organisations in Western Europe and had met various leaders of the international labour movement. Khalturin also went in for wide reading to educate himself. Both these men called for a high degree of organisation in the workers' struggle, and urged the workers to campaign for their political rights. The ideas propagated by the First International left their mark on the action programme of the North-Russian Workers' Union which they drew up.

These two workers' unions were the first independent revolutionary organisations of the Russian proletariat. They were to prove short-lived however; yet although they were soon crushed by the gendarmes, those of their leaders who escaped persecution continued to carry out revolutionary propaganda work among the masses, fostering closer cohesion of the proletariat and enhancing its political consciousness.

With each decade the Russian labour movement grew considerably, and gradually workers' protests became more organised. In 1885, eight thousand textile workers at the Morozov factory in Orekhovo-Zuyevo near Moscow came out on strike. A group of progressive workers led by a former member of the North-Russian Workers' Union, Pyotr Moiseyenko, drew up the strikers' list of demands. The main one was for the abolition of the system of arbitrary fines to which workers were subjected as their employers saw fit. A document containing the workers' demands was handed to the provincial governor when he came to the factory with an escort of soldiers. When the governor gave orders for the workers' leaders to be arrested the strikers came to the rescue of their comrades and a bitter skirmish followed. As a result more than 800 workers were exiled from the town and court action was brought against 33 of the strike leaders.

This strike at the Morozov textile mills put such fear of God

into the government that in the following year Alexander III promulgated a law limiting the fines which factory owners could demand from their employees. This was the first major concession wrested from the tsarist government by the labour movement. The working class of Russia was asserting itself and even reactionary journalists could no longer ignore what in alarm and trepidation they referred to as the "workers' question".

From Populism to Marxism

The previous history of the proletariat had been paving the way for its eventual assumption of the leading role in the Russian democratic movement. The increasing number of workers' demonstrations, the determined strike battles and the active campaign to bring unity and cohesion to the labour movement were to exert a major influence on public life and the development of public thought in the country.

After the *Narodnaya Volya* organisation had been dispersed a sizable group of the *Narodniki* gave up the revolutionary struggle and devoted their energies instead to the sphere of liberal enlightenment. Meanwhile, those who remained true to their revolutionary traditions, started to study the works of leading Western thinkers and the experience of political struggle in other European countries in their search for a sound revolutionary theory. After reading the works of Marx and Engels and observing the mounting tide of proletarian revolutionary protest these intellectuals started to centre their attention on the labour movement.

In 1882, a former *Narodnik*, Georgi Plekhanov, translated the *Communist Manifesto* into Russian, and in 1883 in Geneva, Switzerland, he and his comrades founded the first Russian Social-Democratic organisation which they called the Emancipation of Labour Group. The members were to carry out wide propaganda work and publish Russian translations of the major works of Marx and Engels and their own pamphlets destined to popularise Marxist ideas and expose the inconsistencies of the *Narodniki* programme and their misguided tactics. This development represented an important step forward from Populism towards Marxism.

Plekhanov and his comrades demonstrated that in Russia as in other countries the working class was destined to play the leading role in the revolutionary movement and that the path to victory demanded political struggle on the part of the working class and their seizure of state power. In his address delivered to the First Congress of the Second International in Paris in 1889, Plekhanov declared: "The revolutionary movement in Russia can



VLADIMIR ILYICH LENIN, 1900

triumph only if it becomes a revolutionary movement of the workers."

The members of the Emancipation of Labour Group worked in close liaison with the revolutionary Marxists of Western Europe. Engels closely followed the advance of the revolutionary movement in Russia and welcomed the creation of the first Social-Democratic organisation. Two years after its founding he wrote: "I am proud to know that there is a party among the youth of Russia which frankly and without equivocation accepts the great economic and historical theories of Marx.... Marx himself would have been equally proud of this had he lived a little longer."

However there were a number of inconsistencies in the Group's programme stemming from its members' underestimation of the peasantry's revolutionary potential and their exaggeration of opposition on the part of the liberal bourgeoisie, which while criticising the reactionary policy of the tsarist government could not bring itself to support the revolutionary movement because of its instinctive hostility to popular movements.

Apart from the Emancipation of Labour Group which had its headquarters abroad, Social-Democratic groups started to spring up in Russia itself, first in St. Petersburg and then in other large towns.

One of these Marxist groups in the town of Kazan on the Volga numbered among its members a young student and ardent champion of Marxist revolutionary theory, Vladimir Lenin. It was he who was to deal the final blow to the influence of Populist ideas in the Russian revolutionary movement.

Lenin's Early Revolutionary Activity

Lenin was born in 1870, a year before the Paris Commune and five years before the first workers' union was set up in Russia. His father, Ilya Ulyanov, was a teacher who devoted all his energies to the spread of education among the people, and his mother, who was also a teacher, was an extremely well-educated woman. She had a good command of French, English and German and was well-versed in world literature and classical music and imparted a deep love of knowledge to her children.

Lenin spent his childhood in the small town of Simbirsk (since renamed Ulyanovsk) on the Volga. While still a schoolboy he was able to observe the hard living and working conditions endured both by the peasants who came to the river wharfs to earn money as stevedores and by the national minorities inhabiting the Volga area, such as the Chuvash and Tartars.

At the age of seventeen after completing his secondary education with flying colours, Lenin matriculated at Kazan University. Not long before that his elder brother Alexander had been executed for his part in an unsuccessful *Narodniki* conspiracy to assassinate the Tsar. When he heard of his brother's death, Lenin resolved: "We will follow a different path."

Soon Lenin was expelled from Kazan University for his part in student politics and confined to a remote village. A police officer, instructed to interrogate Lenin, asked him patronisingly: "What on earth are you rebelling for, young man? Don't you realise you're up against a wall?" Lenin retorted sarcastically: "Yes, a wall, but a rotten one; one kick and it will crumble."

While confined in isolation in the country Lenin did not lose heart. He read a great deal and studied the works of Marx and Engels. When he returned to Kazan he joined one of the local underground Social-Democratic groups and when he later had to move to Samara (now Kuibyshev) he himself organised a similar group there. After working on his own to prepare for his graduation exams Lenin graduated with high marks from the law faculty of St. Petersburg University where he had been enrolled as an external student. In 1893 he left Samara for the capital.

Scientific Socialism in the Labour Movement

When Lenin came to St. Petersburg, there were as many as a score of underground Social-Democratic groups in the city. Yet although they were engaged in spreading Marxist ideas among the progressive sections of the proletariat these groups were not working in close collaboration with the mass labour movement. As soon as he started to take part in the propaganda work of the St. Petersburg Social-Democrats, Lenin delivered a number of lectures criticising the theoretical concepts adhered to by the *Narodniki*. These lectures were later to be collected in book form and published under the title *What the "Friends of the People" Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats*. With this critique Lenin finally undermined the influence of Populist ideas, substantiated the principle that the leading role in the Russian revolutionary movement should be played by the working class, and pointed out the vital need to set up a united Marxist workers' party. Staunch faith in the historic mission of the proletariat permeated this early work in which Lenin wrote: "... then the Russian *worker*, rising at the head of all the democratic elements, will overthrow absolutism and lead the *Russian proletariat* (side by side with the proletariat of *all countries*) along the straight

road of open political struggle to the victorious communist revolution."

Lenin also devoted a good deal of his energies to political and ideological education work among the workers, spreading socialist ideas while rallying the workers to revolutionary action. He talked to workers about their problems, their living and working conditions and then wrote leaflets in which he described in simple language what goals the workers should set themselves in their day-to-day struggle against the capitalists. Following Lenin's example, the members of other Social-Democratic groups also started to establish closer ties with the proletarian masses and play an active part in the labour movement.

In the autumn of 1895, at the instance of Lenin, all the Social-Democratic groups in St. Petersburg united in a new organisation, the League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class. This was an important step towards the creation of a revolutionary Marxist workers' party in Russia. Soon afterwards formerly scattered Social-Democratic groups in Moscow, Tula, Rostov-on-Don and other industrial centres in Russia united in more powerful close-knit organisations. The Social-Democrats, who by this time were taking an active part in the industrial strike movement, tried to instil it with greater political organisation and consciousness. Gradually scientific socialism was to be adopted as the revolutionary theory of the labour movement.

The tsarist police soon managed to hunt down and arrest Lenin, but his comrades still at liberty continued to follow the course which he had plotted. In 1896 they organised a mass strike in the St. Petersburg textile mills involving 30,000 workers. This strike was the largest and best organised that the Russian proletariat had yet seen. It had a tremendous impact on Russian society as a whole, demonstrating as it did the strength of the working class and the correctness of Marxist revolutionary theory. Workers in other countries started collecting funds to help the Russian strikers.

Chapter Sixteen

IMPERIALISM, THE HIGHEST AND LAST STAGE OF CAPITALISM

Capitalism Enters Its Imperialist Stage

At the turn of the century capitalism attained the highest stage of its development. The capitalist system of social relations had by this time come to predominate throughout the world and various new features and phenomena started to appear in its nature and development. This did not happen overnight but was a slow, gradual process, coming to full fruition at the turn of the century.

These new features were to be observed in economic and political developments and class relations. Many people noticed these new features in isolation; economists and sociologists described various aspects of these phenomena but were unable to grasp all their implications and draw up the laws governing the development of the new processes.

It was Lenin, in his famous work *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1916), who clearly revealed the essence of imperialism and defined its historical significance. Lenin established that imperialism is not a particular policy adopted or rejected by this or that group of capitalists, but a definite, historically determined stage in the evolution of capitalism, its latest, highest and last stage.

In the economic sphere this new phase of capitalism is distinguished by the following characteristics. First and foremost, the concentration of production and capital reaches a level where the decisive role in a country's economy is played by monopolies. The leading monopolies—powerful trusts and concerns—which gradually take over smaller, less powerful enterprises, come to command a dominant position in their respective industries. For example, by the end of the nineteenth century the Rockefeller oil trust Standard Oil already controlled 90% of the United States' oil production, while the United States Steel Corporation founded

in 1901 by Morgan and possessing assets of over a thousand million dollars had by this time gained control of approximately two-thirds of the steel industry. In Germany the two giant electrical engineering firms, Siemens & Halske and AEG, after taking over their weaker rivals controlled between them about two-thirds of this industry. In France two concerns—Kühlmann and Saint Gobain—ruled the roost in the chemical industry.

Throughout the capitalist world monopolies were to play a decisive role in industrial development. Similar concentration was to be observed in the banking world. Here too, as a rule, four or five banks, each with their network of subsidiaries and affiliated financial businesses, held sway in a given country.

The second distinctive feature of the imperialist stage of capitalist development was the close coalescence of bank and industrial capital—hence the emergence of finance capital and powerful financial oligarchies.

The export of capital, which was now playing an increasingly important role as compared with the export of commodities, was yet another typical feature of imperialism: for example, by 1914, British capital exports totalled between seventy-five and a hundred thousand million francs, French sixty thousand million, and German forty-four thousand million francs. Thus these three countries alone had exported the then colossal sum of almost 200,000,000,000 francs.

The fourth feature typical of the imperialist stage of capitalist development was the formation of international monopoly groupings and the division of the world into spheres of influence of these capitalist alliances. An example of this phenomenon was provided by the international rail cartel which established specific quotas for Britain, Germany, and Belgium. Later France, Austria, Spain and the USA were to join the cartel. In 1909 an international zinc syndicate was set up which determined the scale of production for German, Belgian, French, Spanish and British factories. A number of new international alliances emerged and agreements were drawn up with regard to the division of sales markets between some of the leading monopolies from various countries (which, however, did not necessarily exclude rivalry between them).

Fifth and last was the completion of the territorial division of the world between the leading capitalist powers and the commencement of the struggle aimed at recarving the map.

The first imperialist war over the redivision of the world was the Spanish-American War in 1898. In this war the comparatively young, vigorous capitalism of the United States eager for territorial expansion (by whatever possible means) was opposing Spain whose power was already on the wane and who was finding it more and more difficult to hold her extensive colonial empire together. The

United States soon emerged victorious from this confrontation, driving the Spaniards out of the Philippines and Cuba. The peoples of these two subject territories took up arms to defend their freedom and independence. The Filipinos and the Cubans had no more wish to live under American rule than under the Spanish. However, at that time—at the dawn of the anti-imperialist liberation struggle—the peoples of Cuba and the Philippines were not yet strong enough to defend their independence and the deployment and correlation of class forces in the international arena at that period did not as yet favour the chances of the popular masses.

However, the US imperialists were not alone in aspiring to alter the existing colonial divisions by force of arms. German imperialism, by this time armed to the teeth, entertained similar ambitions, and likewise Japanese imperialism which, not content with suppressing the Korean people, dreamt of encroaching on Chinese territory as well. Italian imperialists, much less buoyant and powerful than their fellows but nevertheless extremely aggressive, in 1896 attempted to absorb Ethiopia.

Meanwhile the established colonial powers—Britain, France, Holland, Portugal and Spain also tightened their grip on the lands they had long held and showed no inclination to part with any of them. The aspirations of young imperialist states which had grown up after them and were eager to wrest colonial territories from the conquerors of old inevitably led to bitter strife between the two groups. In the capitalist world such a fierce clash of interests over the sharing out of colonial booty could only be settled in one way, and that was by war. The struggle for the redivision of the world and colonial possessions was inevitably to lead to an imperialist war.

Imperialism—the Last Stage of Capitalism

Among the various features of imperialism, the most fundamental and important is the appearance of monopolies. Lenin wrote that the most apt short definition of the essential nature of imperialism would be “the monopoly stage of capitalism”. There were naturally numerous local variations to be taken into account: for example, Lenin referred to British imperialism as “colonial imperialism”, German imperialism as “Junker imperialism”, French imperialism as “usurer imperialism”, Russian imperialism as “military-feudal imperialism”. Yet despite all the differences existing between these countries, at times rather considerable, their development reflected the operation of all the general laws inherent in imperialism, as a definite stage of capitalist development.

Once capitalism had reached this highest form of its development—the monopoly—it had reached a historical watershed. Monopoly capitalism is not only the highest stage of capitalism but also its last stage. Under imperialism not only have the objective material conditions been created for the transition to a different, socialist mode of production, but also all the basic contradictions inherent in the capitalist system have become so acute that a revolutionary solution is inevitable. It was this consideration that led Lenin to assert that imperialism was the final stage before the socialist revolution.

Parasitic Features and Decay of the Capitalist System at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century

The historical inevitability of the downfall of imperialism was reflected and still manifests itself in a variety of phenomena. Even at the beginning of the twentieth century, when the capitalist system of social relations dominated the whole world, signs of its decay and decline were already to be observed. Monopoly, by its very nature, gives birth to stagnation and decay. This does not however imply that capitalism at this final stage leads immediately to stagnation of production. During the imperialist stage production even increases, and several industries expand extremely rapidly. Yet at the same time the unevenness of capitalist development comes much more clearly to the fore and various new features of capitalism such as parasitism and decay emerge.

These features are reflected in such phenomena as the growth of non-productive strata in the ruling classes, the increasing number of rentiers—individuals living on the interest gleaned from the capital they loan out. Rentiers are in essence parasites, who carry out no useful social function and have long since ceased to do any real work; in the imperialist era they come to constitute a sizable section of society in many developed capitalist countries. Those countries which export capital and draw interest from it also assume the functions of rentiers. The sixty thousand million francs which France invested abroad in 1914 would no doubt have served to inject a powerful new lease of life into the country's own economy. This stands out particularly clearly if we take into account how the war indemnity of five thousand million francs paid in 1871-73 to Germany gave a major boost to the latter's economy. However the wealthy businessmen who export capital give little thought to the home economy but are only concerned with gaining maximum profits, and their transactions are gradually turning the countries where they hold sway into rentier states.

Another reflection of parasitism and decay in the last, imperialist stage of capitalism is the rapid, sweeping increase in the ranks of those employed in various types of unproductive work. An enormous amount of human effort is wasted through war. During the imperialist war of 1914-18 in the seven main belligerent countries more than sixty million able-bodied men were mobilised; instead of carrying out productive work they were engaged in exterminating each other. Altogether 36 states took part in this war and their total population numbered over a thousand million.

Yet even in peace time military budgets and the arms race devour a considerable part of a country's labour. In Germany on the eve of the First World War allocations for military purposes were two and a half times larger than those for all other purposes; in France at the same period military spending accounted for more than a third of the budget.

The decay of capitalism was also reflected in the fact that in a number of instances it started to act as a brake on technological progress. In cases where the interests of the monopolies did not demand technical innovations and improvements they made no attempt to introduce any and even deliberately obstructed them.

Imperialism and Political Reaction

Yet these signs of parasitism, decay and decline which appeared in the capitalist system at the beginning of the twentieth century did not in the slightest imply any change in its aggressive, reactionary character. On the contrary, during the imperialist era the reactionary, aggressive features inherent in the capitalist system become even more clearly pronounced. At this period the arms race, far from slowing down, intensifies. Through their militaristic policies, open military threats and the unleashing of imperialist wars the strongest among the great imperialist powers seek, by conquering and enslaving weaker countries, to consolidate and enhance their own influence and domination. Imperialism and war go hand in hand.

Yet imperialism does not only imply aggression on foreign soil. The imperialist epoch is one of mounting reaction both in domestic and foreign policies of the various capitalist countries. Once it has reached the summit of its power and has come to constitute the ruling class of oppressors, the bourgeoisie is no longer interested in social progress. Indeed, the imperialist bourgeoisie is bitterly opposed to progress and comes to constitute a bastion of reaction and counter-revolution. The motive force behind all the activities of the imperialist bourgeoisie—the monopolists, bankers, factory-owners, traders, colonialists and all powerful men of property—

is the drive for maximum profits—nothing else matters. At an earlier period, the activities and creed of the bourgeoisie were directed against the Church, but in the twentieth century the imperialist bourgeoisie is working hand in glove with the Church in order to defend their common self-seeking interests. The bourgeoisie was once an enemy of the hereditary aristocracy and absolutism but now itself has come to constitute a moneyed aristocracy and is going out of its way to establish a closer relationship with what remained of the nobility, striving in every way to consolidate the state machinery which serves its interests. Less than two centuries earlier, in the age of the Enlightenment, the bourgeoisie had proclaimed the triumph of freedom and reason, championed social and personal freedom and sought support among the popular masses. By the twentieth century, however, this class had become a bastion of reaction and obscurantism, promulgating a cult of militarism and violence, great power nationalism and brutal chauvinism. Its former hero Voltaire, the champion of free thought, was now replaced by the extremely reactionary German philosopher Nietzsche (1844-1900) whose writings are permeated with cynical acclamation of brute force and all manner of anti-humanist ideas.

Opposition to Imperialist Reaction

In the imperialist era the united forces of reaction have met with opposition from the forces championing democracy and the interests of the people. In the steps of the working class, which constitutes the main enemy of the imperialist bourgeoisie, non-proletarian strata of the working population also join in the struggle. Outstanding writers at the turn of the century exposed the capitalist world in their finest works, criticising its code of morals and social conventions. Among them were such figures as Anatole France (1884-1924), Romain Rolland (1866-1944), Heinrich Mann (1871-1950), Thomas Mann (1875-1955) and Jack London (1876-1916). Teachers, and other professionals, the lower and middle echelons of white-collar workers, who earlier remained aloof from the class struggle, now begin to participate in it.

The working class at this period asserts itself as the main bastion of democracy more and more forcefully. Time and time again when the proletariat together with those democratic forces which afforded it direct or indirect support came out on the offensive, the ruling classes found themselves obliged to make concessions. For instance, in Britain in face of a new wave of activity in the labour movement the Liberal government led by

the dexterous and intelligent Lloyd George (1863-1945) introduced a number of reforms including: an eight-hour day for miners (1908); social insurance for workers to provide against sickness and unemployment (1911); the Parliament Bill (1911) which stipulated that measures which passed the Commons three times unaltered in three separate sessions could be presented for royal assent without consent of the Lords, and that financial measures might be so presented without repeated passage a month after passing the Commons. In 1905 a law was introduced in France disestablishing the Church, and universal suffrage was introduced in Austria in 1907 (for men).

Colonialism and Colonial Policy

Imperialism also brought in its wake intensification of colonial aggressions. Both the Great Powers and the small, yet industrially developed, capitalist countries such as Belgium and Holland went out of their way to intensify the exploitation of the subject peoples in their respective colonies. At the same time they strove to gain control of any territory which for some reason or other (usually as a result of rivalry between various claimants) had not yet been annexed. Not only those countries which had entered the colonial race at this late stage, but also the established colonial powers aspired to new conquests.

At the beginning of the century Britain possessed the largest colonial empire. In 1900 her colonies and dependent territories had an area 109 times greater than that of the mother country, with a population 8.8 times greater. In Britain's hands were concentrated 44.9% of the world's colonial territories, and it was these colonies that were the source of her might and wealth. But still unsatisfied with this the British colonialists were bent on extending the bounds of the empire "wider still and wider". Thus from 1899 to 1902 Britain waged an openly aggressive war of plunder against the two Boer Republics of Transvaal and Orange Free State, which she finally succeeded in annexing. The Boer War was one of the first imperialist wars which aroused the just indignation of progressives everywhere. In 1906 Britain seized the New Hebrides islands. Although Britain's economic might no longer constituted the same threat to her rivals, this did not mean that she was prepared to abandon even the tiniest corner of her enormous empire. The British lion had placed its foot firmly on its prey and growled fiercely whenever anyone made an attempt to come near.

France's empire was the second largest both as regards territory and population, yet this consideration did not satisfy the

appetites of the French colonialists. During the first decade of the twentieth century, to the great displeasure of the German imperialists who made repeated threats of war in this connection, France engaged in the "penetration" of Morocco. By 1911 for all practical purposes Morocco had already been annexed and incorporated into the French colonial empire.

The small yet economically powerful country of Belgium conquered the enormous territory of the Congo in Central Africa at the end of the nineteenth century and proceeded to submit its people to merciless exploitation.

Apart from these undisguised acts of colonial plunder the Great Powers and economically developed capitalist countries also frequently engaged in covert forms of colonial expansion. It often proved more advantageous and convenient for the imperialists to present themselves as friends and defenders of the peoples of the economically backward countries rather than to employ open violence. Such was the course adopted for example by the powerful imperialist circles of the United States.

On frequent occasions the dollar was to prove a more effective weapon than the bayonet for imperialist giants from the USA. In the countries of Latin America, formally recognised as independent sovereign states, American influence asserted itself mainly by means of economic infiltration. US capital soon penetrated all spheres of economic life in the Latin American countries, and succeeded in ousting most of its British rivals. The nominally independent states of Latin America were in practice to become peons of American capital.

The colonial enslavement of China was to follow a different pattern. Officially China was still (prior to the revolution of 1911) an independent sovereign empire. In practice however the roost was ruled by competing groups of British, American, Japanese, Russian, French and German imperialists. China was at the mercy of a number of imperialist countries.

Another form of imperialist bondage was that which could be observed in Iran at the turn of the century. For a considerable period Britain and Russia had been competing for domination of this country and finally in 1907 they signed an agreement defining their respective spheres of influence, the Russian one in the North and the British in the South, while the central part of the country was termed a neutral zone. Iran, which formally remained independent, was by this time for all practical purposes controlled by two of the Great Powers—Britain and Russia.

Despite the variety of forms it took, some blatant, others covert, the essence of colonialism remained the same, bringing oppression, ruin, exploitation and even extermination of the peoples whom it fettered.

In India, referred to at this period as the "pearl in the British crown", average life expectation under British rule was no more than 26. Some of the colonial peoples such as the Maoris of New Zealand, large numbers of the Papuans of New Guinea and the Red Indians in the USA were condemned to virtual extinction.

Imperialist Rivalry Comes to a Head. The Final Division of Europe into Armed Camps

Growing colonial expansion, fierce rivalry for markets and spheres of capital investment, new sources of raw materials and "spheres of influence" and the drive to redivide the world which was now in full swing, all served to aggravate deep imperialist contradictions still further. Among these contradictions which divided the imperialist powers, those between Britain and Germany were the most serious. Powerful and aggressive Germany, all out to snatch its share of the colonial booty and attain world domination, was making the most of every opportunity to obstruct the interests of the British imperialists. It was quite evident that in the near future the German militarists would abandon mere economic and political pressure and resort to force against Britain.

British diplomats found themselves obliged to abandon their former tactics. They were no longer in a position to pursue the policy of "splendid isolation" and were instead compelled to seek out allies. In 1904 Britain reached an agreement with France as to the limits of their respective colonial seizures (Egypt went to Britain, and Morocco to France) and this paved the way for the Entente Cordiale between the two countries. On a similar basis (the division of spheres of influence in Iran) Britain reached an agreement with Russia in 1907. These two agreements meant for all intents and purposes that Britain had by now joined the Franco-Russian alliance. Although Britain did not take on herself such clearly defined military obligations as France and Russia, in the context of the then tense Anglo-German relations, she naturally became one of the most active members of the Triple Entente, as the alliance came to be known.

Europe was now divided up into two powerful imperialist blocs, the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente, both of which were actively preparing for war. In view of the fact that most of the Great Powers were members of one of these blocs, that they had sizable colonial possessions scattered over the globe, and a wide range of contacts and interests were at stake, the imminent conflagration was bound to be not merely a European but a world war.

Chapter Seventeen

RUSSIA BECOMES THE CENTRE OF THE WORLD REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT. THE AWAKENING OF ASIA

Russia Heading Towards Revolution

Since the Paris Commune of 1871 there had been no mass revolutionary outbreaks in Western Europe. In Russia, however, the tide of mass protest both among the workers and the peasants was mounting rapidly with every decade.

The imperialist stage of development aggravated still further the contradictions already pertaining in tsarist Russia. Side by side with modern industry and finance capital there still existed mediaeval forms of landownership with the resulting semi-feudal relations in rural areas.

In no other large European country were such stark social contrasts to be found. The Russia of that period knew both well-lit modern cities with enormous factories and luxurious residences of bankers and industrial magnates and tiny remote villages where people dressed in bast shoes and homespun cultivated their land with obsolete ploughs and harvested their crops by hand with sickles, giving up nearly half of their produce to the landowners. Monopoly capital not only chose not to interfere with these remnants of serfdom, but in order to ensure maximum profits even took action to make sure they did not disappear. The country's general backwardness and the abject poverty of the bulk of the population provided still further opportunities for intensifying the exploitation of the working people.

The popular masses in Russia suffered not merely as a result of capitalist oppression but also from arbitrary treatment at the hands of the landowners and the despotic tsarist state machinery. This led to an increasingly tense political atmosphere. A nationwide revolution of the popular masses was imminent. It was to be led and organised by the working class, which by this time

had gained much useful experience in the strike movement and had been steeled by the class battles of the preceding decades.

With the industrial crisis at the turn of the century the revolutionary activities of the workers and the peasantry gathered momentum. Workers started striking for political reasons instead of purely economic ones and organising street demonstrations which often gave rise to skirmishes with the police and the tsarist troops. The peasants started to go in for more active forms of protest attacking the landowners, ransacking their estates and seizing their lands by force instead of merely presenting petitions and refusing to carry out traditional labour services. This mounting tide of revolutionary activity also caught up the democratic strata of the intelligentsia, and student protests took place in many university towns.

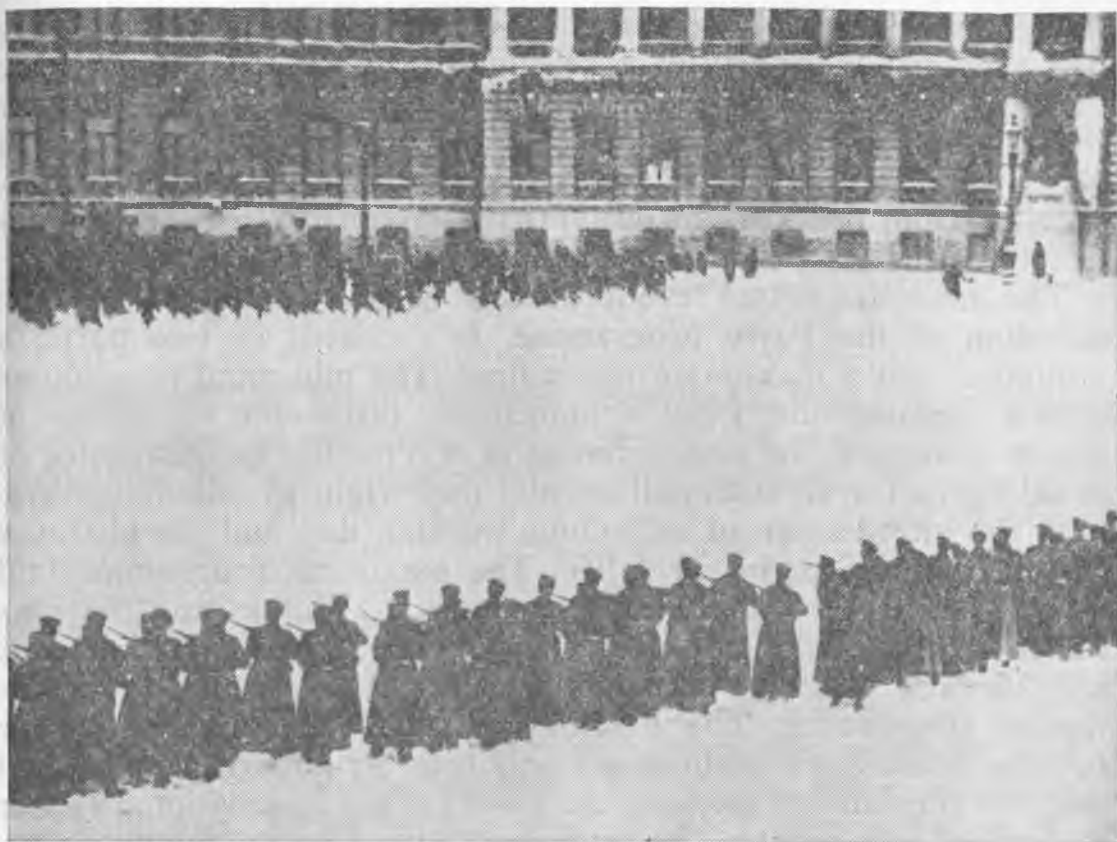
In the summer of 1903, what at first had been a series of isolated strikes in the industrial towns of the South developed into an enormous general strike that spread from Odessa and Rostov-on-Don as far as Baku and Batumi. It involved two hundred thousand workers of various nationalities—Russians, Ukrainians, Armenians, Georgians and Azerbaijanians.

Strikes of such a size and such cohesion between workers of different nationalities had not yet been seen in any other country at that period. The Russian proletariat was clearly becoming the avant-garde of the international revolutionary movement.

The Founding of a Revolutionary Marxist Party in Russia

In order to carry out its historic role successfully, it was imperative that the Russian working class should set up a revolutionary Marxist party. Russian Social-Democrats, ever since the time of the Emancipation of Labour Group, were constantly drawing attention to this fact. The first nucleus of such a party was the League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class, which Lenin had founded in 1895 in St. Petersburg, and which had been suppressed by the police soon afterwards. Three years later, in 1898, representatives of a number of Social-Democratic organisations held an illegal meeting in Minsk where they announced the founding of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. Yet this initiative was also nipped in the bud, since those present at the Party's First Congress were soon arrested, leaving the underground committees and groups scattered all over the country without any central leadership once again.

In 1900, on the initiative of Lenin, who had recently returned from exile in Siberia, Russian Marxist revolutionaries began



Shooting the demonstrators on the Palace Square. 9th January, 1905. A photograph

publication in Stuttgart of a newspaper called *Iskra* (The Spark). The editorial of the first copy, entitled "The Urgent Tasks of Our Movement" was by Lenin.

In tsarist Russia where there was no freedom of speech, of assembly or association this underground newspaper was the only means of carrying out wide-scale political agitation and organising the ranks of the progressive workers. Copies of *Iskra* printed abroad were smuggled into Russia through Rumania, Iran, Finland, Germany and other countries. The Editorial Board appointed a number of agents, mainly experienced professional revolutionaries, who distributed the newspaper to all corners of Russia and set up close links with local Social-Democratic committees. Underground printing presses in Kishinev and Baku also helped to ensure *Iskra* a wide circulation. The paper did not only print propaganda articles but also quickly responded to all current developments, printing reports from its correspondents all over Russia.

Iskra played a leading role in the preparatory work for the Second Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party which took place in 1903. At this congress Lenin and his fellow

“hard-line *Iskraists*” consistently defended the principles they had evolved for a party of a new type in the face of attack from various opportunist elements. During the elections to the Party’s leading bodies Lenin and his supporters secured a majority of votes, from which time onwards they came to be known as Bolsheviks (from the Russian *bolshinstvo*—majority) and their opponents Mensheviks (from *menshinstvo*—minority).

The most important event at this Second Congress was the adoption of the Party programme. It consisted of two parts: a minimum and a maximum programme. The minimum programme clearly defined the Party’s immediate tasks—the overthrow of tsarist autocracy, the establishment of a republic, the guarantee of equal rights for all nationalities and their right to self-determination, the introduction of an 8-hour working day and the abolition of feudal practices in rural life. The maximum programme laid down the Party’s ultimate goal—socialist revolution and the construction of a socialist society. In no other country at that time was there a workers’ party with such a fundamentally revolutionary programme. The drafting of such a programme by the Russian Marxist revolutionaries was thus an important event not only for the Russian working class but for the international labour movement as a whole. The setting up of a Russian revolutionary Marxist party was the most important result of the Second Congress of Russian Social-Democrats.

The First Russian Revolution

Meanwhile the revolutionary movement in Russia continued to grow. Discontent mounted rapidly, particularly after the defeats in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905.

In January 1905, the workers of many of St. Petersburg’s leading factories went on strike. In an effort to dissuade the workers from engaging in revolutionary activity and encouraged by the police, the priest Father Georgi Gapon persuaded the workers of the capital to submit a petition listing their demands to the Tsar. Many of the workers still preserved a naive faith in the Tsar as the “father of the people”, and believed that he was unaware of their true plight. So on Sunday January 9th, an enormous crowd of almost 150,000 workers gathered from all corners of the city and marched in procession to the Winter Palace carrying icons and portraits of the Tsar to deliver their petition. Nicholas II, far from meeting the workers, left for his country residence leaving the military High Command in charge of the capital. The marchers were met with bullets, and more than a thousand people were killed and twice that number wounded.

This day was to go down in history as "Bloody Sunday". The Tsar's cruel reprisals against a peaceful demonstration caused widespread indignation and served to finally convince the people that the Tsar was not their father but their bitter enemy. That same evening in some districts of St. Petersburg workers started to collect arms and build barricades. In the days that followed a mighty wave of protest was to spread to the fringes of the empire.

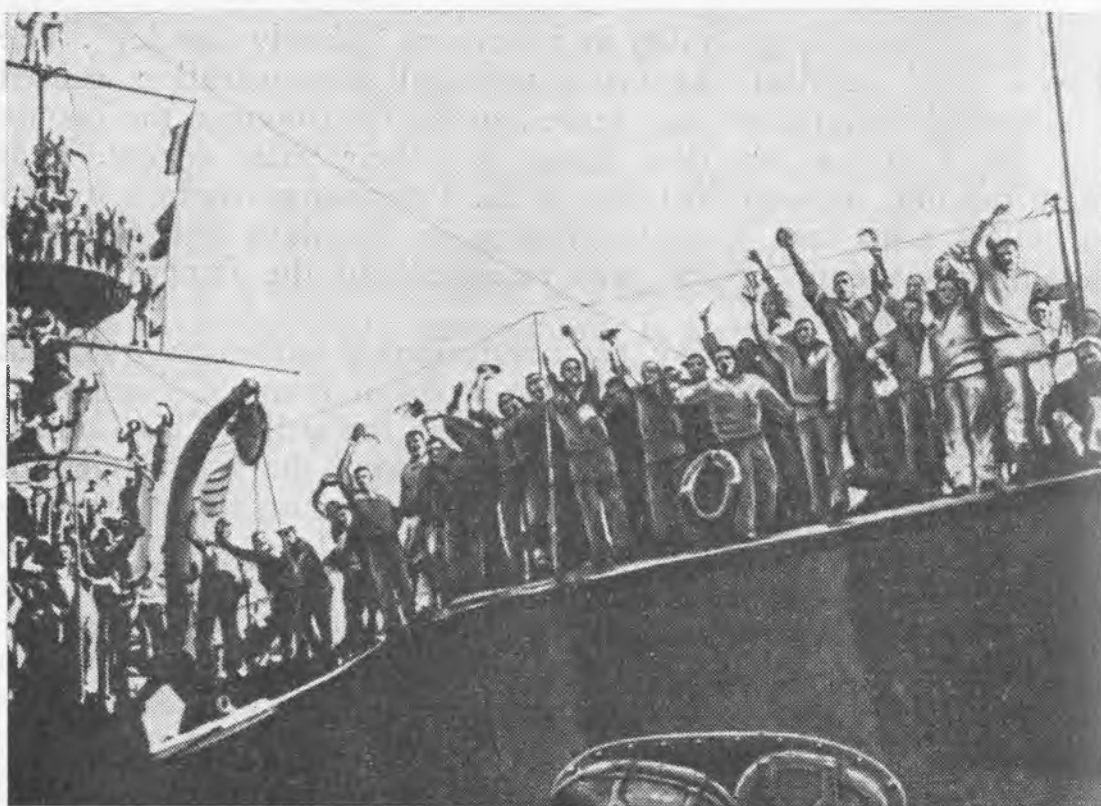
After a brief lull in May, the revolutionary movement gathered new momentum. Textile workers on strike in Ivanovo-Voznesensk elected a special council or Soviet to lead the strike. This Council and those elected in several other cities were the first Soviets of Workers' Deputies that were later to become organs of revolutionary power in Russia.

In June the crew of the battleship *Potemkin* mutinied. Never before had the revolutionary flag been hoisted on so large a war vessel. Under this flag the *Potemkin* sailed into Odessa where a general strike was on. The special squadron sent out to seize the rebel ship did not fire a single shot, since the sailors refused to carry out their officers' orders and showed open sympathy to their fellows. Although the crew of the *Potemkin* failed to establish the necessary contact with the proletariat of the Black Sea towns and was later obliged to call in at a Rumanian port and there abandon their ship, the impact of this historic mutiny was tremendous. The tsarist government had now been shown that it could not even rely on its armed forces for support.

The strike of the Moscow printers opened a new stage in the revolutionary upsurge, which culminated in October 1905 in a nation-wide political strike, involving some two million industrial and railway workers. Industrial centres and railways were paralysed. The history of the international labour movement had never before witnessed a strike on so wide a scale.

This unprecedented unity in the ranks of the workers and groups of low-ranking white-collar workers, teachers and students that joined their cause reduced government circles to absolute panic. After some hesitation, Nicholas II realised that it was no use relying exclusively on repression to crush this growing revolutionary movement, and on October 17th he published a manifesto promising the people democratic freedoms and the convocation of a legislative State Duma.

Lenin and the Bolsheviks exposed the manoeuvres of the Tsar for what they were worth, calling upon the proletariat to prepare to carry out a nation-wide armed uprising aimed at overthrowing tsarist autocracy. Back in the days of the October strike Soviets of Workers' Deputies had started springing up in a number of industrial centres. Lenin pointed out that these councils for



A meeting of sailors on the battleship *Potemkin* during the revolutionary uprising of June 1905. A photograph

organising strikes must become organs capable of leading an uprising and eventually organs of new, revolutionary government.

The climax of this revolutionary upsurge was the armed uprising organised in December 1905 by the workers of Moscow backed up by those of Rostov-on-Don, Novorossiisk, Sormovo and other industrial centres. In all these towns the Bolsheviks were to be found in the forefront of the insurgents, rallying the workers and encouraging them in the battles with the tsarist forces. At this period, however, the Bolsheviks had little experience in the organisation of street fighting and armed revolt in general. These uprisings were not timed to start simultaneously and lacked central organisation which greatly reduced the chances of their developing into a nation-wide revolution. The conciliatory tactics of the Mensheviks had a negative effect on the insurgent workers' morale, which finally allowed the tsarist government first to isolate the centres of revolt and then set about their methodical suppression.

The revolutionary ferment continued in 1906 and 1907 but by this time the tide was on the ebb. The lack of a firm alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry made itself very clearly felt. Peasant revolts in various parts of the country obliged the

Tsar to abolish the redemption payments for the land which the peasants had been given in 1861. However, these outbreaks remained sporadic and isolated. The peasants still entertained the illusion that their lot might be improved and they might gain more land from the Tsar's bounty or by a resolution of the Duma. Vacillation, so common among the peasantry, was also to be found among the soldiers. Despite mutinies in various regiments and on certain ships, the army and navy as a whole did not come over to the side of the revolution and were instead used by the Tsar to crush it.

The tsarist regime stood its ground in face of this revolutionary onslaught and in this it was helped by the Western capitalist countries which granted the tsarist government a large loan at the most critical moment. The government also had the backing of the big bourgeoisie which was alarmed at the scale of this people's revolution and helped the tsarist authorities "enforce law and order".

The first Russian revolution was defeated, but useful lessons were learned from it. It furthered the working people's political education and helped them to free themselves of illusions as to the patriarchal role of the Tsar. Events had shown that it was the proletariat that was destined to play the leading role in the revolutionary movement. They also made clear the vital need for a firm alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry, and for winning over the army to the side of the revolution.

In the course of 1905-1907 the significance of methods of struggle such as political strikes and armed revolt and of the role of organs such as the Soviets of Workers' Deputies made itself clearly felt. Experience had shown that the only consistent revolutionary party was that of the followers of Marx and Lenin, the Party of the Bolsheviks.

With regard to the historical significance of the first Russian revolution, Lenin was later to write: "Without the 'dress rehearsal' of 1905, the victory of the October Revolution in 1917 would have been impossible."

The Influence of the Russian Revolution on the International Labour Movement

The revolutionary struggle of the Russian working class acted as a stimulus to the labour movement in various countries of Western Europe. News of "Bloody Sunday" aroused a wave of bitter indignation among the workers of Europe, who voiced their solidarity with the working people of Russia at special meetings and rallies. "Count on us! You can be sure of our help! Down

with the Tsar! Long live social revolution!"—wrote the leaders of the French trade unions in a special address to the Russian workers.

The newspaper brought out by the German Left Social-Democrats *Leipziger Volkszeitung* pointed out that in the victory over the tsarist regime which the Russian working class was destined to achieve, the international labour movement saw the vital precondition for their own victory over capitalism. In 1905 the strike movement gained new momentum throughout Europe. Western Europe had not seen class battles on such a scale for many years. The events which were taking place in Russia, convinced workers in the West of the effectiveness of mass political strikes, which they started to refer to as "Russian tactics". In September Budapest workers organised a general political strike. In October and November the workers of Vienna, Prague and Cracow rallied to take part in political strikes. Powerful demonstrations of Austrian and Czech workers culminated in the erection of barricades and skirmishes with the police and troops.

"What happened in Russia, must happen here!" was the slogan which expressed the aspirations of the workers abroad to follow the example of the heroic Russian working class. In December 1905 a second political strike was organised in Budapest and a month later the first general political strike in the history of the German labour movement was organised in Hamburg.

The experience of the revolution in Russia pointed to the need for the mobilisation and cohesion of all revolutionary elements. In the context of the mounting strike movement in the spring of 1905, the French socialists united their ranks to form a single party.

The solidarity campaign in support of the Russian people in their struggle against tsarist despotism was supported by progressives throughout Europe. The well-known French writer, Anatole France, who headed the "Society of Friends of the Russian People", wrote at the time: "The Russian revolution is a world revolution. It has shown the world proletariat its methods of struggle and its goals, its power and its destiny. . . . The fate of the new Europe and mankind's future is now being decided on the banks of the Neva, the Vistula and the Volga."

The first Russian revolution showed quite clearly that Russia had become the centre of the world revolutionary movement.

The Awakening of Asia

At the turn of the century in the majority of the countries of Asia and North Africa the seeds of future national liberation movements had already been sown. New forms of exploitation

of colonial and dependent countries not only involved more extensive exploitation of these countries' natural resources and their peoples in the interests of European and North American capital, but were also accompanied by the development of capitalist relations.

The export of capital which distinguishes the imperialist stage of capitalist development led to the setting up of capitalist industrial enterprises, large plantations and mines in the countries of Asia where limitless quantities of cheap raw material and labour were available. The need to export raw materials and sell European manufactured goods and the growth of towns in these countries promoted the construction of railways, roads, ports and public amenities. In the plantations and factories set up by the Europeans a working class started to grow up. In many colonial countries its emergence preceded that of a local industrial bourgeoisie.

These workers, many of them former craftsmen who had been ruined by the influx of European manufactured goods, were subjected to cruel exploitation by their European employers and the latter's numerous overseers and recruiting agents. The workers were almost all illiterate, and generally maintaining close contact with the villages they had originally come from remained very much under the influence of mediaeval religious and caste traditions. The class consciousness of these workers was only at the formative stage, yet the appalling conditions in which they lived and worked gave rise to various spontaneous protests in demand of their basic economic rights.

The domination of the imperialist monopolies held back the growth of the local industrial bourgeoisie, which found it more or less impossible to compete with the commodities sold by the advanced capitalist countries, whose representatives enjoyed positions of great privilege. In these circumstances the emergent local bourgeoisie was obliged to content itself with trading and small-scale industrial undertakings which did not require large-scale capital investment, and was confined to the home market. The imperialists, who had a vested interest in retaining the colonial and dependent countries as their sources of agricultural produce and industrial raw materials, placed insuperable barriers in the path of industrialisation in these countries, that is of the production of the means of production.

The main bastion of support for the imperialist powers in their colonies and the nominally independent countries was the reactionary landowner class, and the compradors, who thrived as middlemen in trade between the latter and the foreign entrepreneurs. The fact that much of the land was concentrated in the hands of big landowners made it easy to exploit the land-hungry

and landless peasants by means of crippling rents, which had been typical of the feudal era. By various means the landowners succeeded in robbing the peasants of most of their produce and showed no desire to introduce capitalist farming methods. It was only for the production of some industrial crops that hired labour and large-scale undertakings proved more advantageous to the landowners and prosperous peasants.

The stratification of the peasantry intensified, but only a small section was to be in a position to prosper in the new conditions. The vast mass of the peasants were hit by ruin, lost their holdings and became virtual debt slaves of the powerful landowners.

Not only the working masses but also the national bourgeoisie in these countries were denied any part in administration and were subjected to constant oppression and discrimination. Political, administrative and legal power were all in the hands of the colonialists and their henchmen from among the local reactionary classes. All these factors gave rise to irreconcilable contradictions between the colonial peoples and the imperialists.

In the semi-colonial countries the working people and the national bourgeoisie were directly opposed by the big landowners and the bureaucracy headed by the corrupt despotic dynasties. However, although these rulers were little more than obedient tools in the hands of foreign powers whose interests were served by preserving the economic and political backwardness of the semi-colonial countries, the role of the imperialists as the main prop of obsolete feudal regimes was not yet clearly grasped even by many of the progressives in these countries.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, in all countries of Asia and North Africa the struggle against feudalism and domination of foreign imperialists had become a task of paramount importance, essential to the achievement of independent national development. The emergence of closer links between the various regions of these countries and the development of an internal market, albeit slow and uneven, promoted the emergence of nations. In many colonial and dependent countries the population consisted of numerous different peoples and ethnic groups. The emergence of nations in these areas was therefore of necessity an extremely complicated process. In the Ottoman Empire, for example, the emergence of nations among the various non-Turkish subject peoples was far in advance of the parallel process in Turkey itself. Arabs, Macedonians and Albanians struggled to free themselves from the yoke of Turkish absolutism and set up their own independent states.

In India, Indonesia, the Philippines and other colonial countries two parallel processes were to be observed in the emergence of

nations: some nations emerged on the basis of the development of one particular nationality—as was the case with the Gujarati, Bengalis and Marathas in India, the Javanese in Indonesia and the Tagalogs in the Philippines, while other nations emerged as a result of the fusing of various nationalities. The common interests of peoples of various nationalities in the colonial countries in the struggle against foreign imperialist domination paved the way for their closer unity on a national scale and lent a united character to the nascent bourgeois nationalist movements. The local intelligentsia in these countries was to become the spokesman of this mounting anti-feudal and anti-imperialist struggle.

The first representatives of this intelligentsia were members of the privileged and prosperous classes. Many of them had had the opportunity to receive their education abroad. Yet at the same time modern secular education was making advances in the semi-colonial countries. The colonialists started setting up schools, special training establishments and even universities in order to train the junior personnel required by government bodies and private establishments and to provide doctors and lawyers.

The introduction of European education on a limited scale was also designed to mould the opinions and attitudes of the local population and foster recognition of the superiority of the imperialist masters and their culture. Nevertheless, the imperialists were no longer in a position to prevent the infiltration of progressive ideas among the youth of these countries and above all among the intelligentsia from among the non-privileged classes.

As early as the end of the nineteenth century the British masters of India grew concerned at the growing spirit of protest and the influence of revolutionary ideas and nationalist sentiment among the student body. Vice-Roy Lord Curzon introduced a special university reform designed to make university places more difficult of access for those with democratic sympathies.

The intelligentsia from among the bourgeoisie and the landowners which criticised the existing order in these countries, demanded participation in the administration and pressed for economic reforms, upholding first and foremost the interests of the classes from which they themselves came. It was only a small minority of representatives of the privileged strata of society who, together with the revolutionary petty-bourgeois intelligentsia, effectively came out in support of the oppressed working masses.

The struggle of the emergent national bourgeoisie to uphold its class interests was at the time still a struggle of a national, general democratic nature, directed against imperialism and feudalism, and was of immediate concern to all classes of society. In all these countries there existed by this time the necessary preconditions for national unity and cohesion.



A demonstration in Istanbul in July 1908 to celebrate the granting of the Constitution. Photograph

Thus, by the beginning of the twentieth century conditions were ripe for bourgeois revolution in many countries of Asia. The opportunities for carrying out such revolutions, their scale and probable outcome varied a great deal from country to country, depending on a large number of internal and external factors.

The defeat of what had once seemed the invincible might of tsarist Russia in the war with Japan and especially the Russian revolution of 1905 were to have an enormous influence on the awakening national consciousness of the peoples of Asia and their anti-imperialist and anti-feudal struggle. "World capitalism and the 1905 movement in Russia have finally aroused Asia," Lenin remarked at the time.

The Russian revolution of 1905 was the first bourgeois-democratic revolution to have been carried out under the leadership of the working class. Unlike any of the bourgeois revolutions that preceded it, the Russian revolution had set itself the task of implementing far-reaching democratic transformations in society. This made it an example and model for many countries, but particularly, as was only natural, for those countries of the East which were still faced with problems calling for bourgeois revolution, a stage through which the majority of Western countries had long since passed.

Events in Russia had an especially strong impact in the Asian countries bordering on the Russian Empire, which had been objects of tsarist imperialist expansion but which had for many years also proved fertile soil for the sowing of progressive ideas by the democratic strata of Russian society.

Numerous immigrants from the Asian countries that bordered on Russia—Iranians in Baku and Central Asia, Koreans in the Far East of the Empire, and Chinese working on the Chinese Eastern Railway—took part in the 1905 revolution against the tsarist regime alongside the Russians. They were later to bring revolutionary ideas and experience to their native countries.

The Persian Revolution—1905-1911

The crisis of feudal society in Persia was aggravated by the large influx of foreign capital. The onerous loans which Persia had run up with Britain and Russia obliged the government to grant still further trade concessions and privileges to these two imperialist powers. In 1901 a British businessman by the name of d'Arcy gained a concession for oil extraction in the whole of Persia with the exception of the Northern provinces. Later this concession was to provide the basis of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company—one of the main instruments of imperialism in the colonial enslavement of Persia. The Imperial Bank of Persia complete with its numerous branches and possessed of the right of issue dominated the country's financial system. In the North it was the Russo-Persian Bank which held sway. Customs and excise were in the hands of Belgians headed by Naus. A Cossack brigade was set up with the help of Russian officers and under their command at the special request of the Shah so as to create a particularly loyal unit.

The feudal ruling class headed by Shah Muzaffar ed-Din intensified their exploitation of the working people. Most of the money in the state treasury and that obtained via foreign loans was spent at the Shah's court and by his minions—a state of affairs which gave rise to increasing discontent. Spontaneous revolts were continually breaking out in various parts of the country, and in the army where the soldiers were often not paid for months on end. Ever wider sections of the urban population came to appreciate the need to restrict the absolute powers of the Shah and his henchmen.

The weak Persian bourgeoisie which had no political party or organisation, part of the landowning class, whose estates by this time were run on a commercial basis, and even the religious leaders, whose economic and political privileges were being encroached on by the Shah's government all supported the reform movement.



Bast in the grounds of the British mission in Tehran.
Photograph, 1906

In this tense atmosphere the influence of the Russian revolution was to prove electrifying. The slightest pretext would suffice to set in motion a wide revolutionary movement.

On December 12, 1905, the arrest and maltreatment in Tehran of a number of merchants who had protested against the extortionate taxes and the greed of one of the Shah's ruthless favourites, aroused sharp indignation throughout the country. Bazaars and workshops were closed and at a special rally held in a mosque a demand was put forward for the dismissal of a number of hated government officials and the setting up of a special commission for the survey of the people's grievances. The meeting was disbanded by force, which aroused still greater popular indignation. As a sign of protest a number of religious leaders left the capital

to take *bast* (or sanctuary) in a mosque not far from the capital. There they were joined by about two thousand merchants and craftsmen. These *bastis* sent a group of spokesmen to the Shah and also to other towns to seek support. Unrest started in Shiraz and Meshed and continued in the capital, where a part of the city garrison was involved.

Alarmed by the spread of this popular movement the Shah decided to make a number of concessions and promised to comply with the demands that had been put to him. He replaced the particularly unpopular governors of Tehran and Kerman and issued a decree establishing a House of Justice (*Adalat Khane*). At this the *bastis* returned to the capital. However, the Shah's government was in no haste to fulfil the promises made in the hope that it would be able to get the movement under control. Meanwhile the tide of discontent rose. In the summer of 1906 the dispersal by force of arms of a group of demonstrators in the capital who had freed a popular champion of reforms was the signal for mass action. Once again bazaars and shops were shut down and the streets of Tehran were soon crowded with demonstrators, against whom the Shah's troops opened fire. On July 15th 200 religious leaders set out from the capital for Qum. The next day a group of leading merchants took *bast* in the garden of the British Embassy. Within a short space of time the *bastis* numbered 13,000. Their demands were drawn up in a petition which was handed to the Shah and sent to Qum and other towns. These demands were taken up as a programme of revolutionary struggle. On this occasion, along with the former demands was a new one for the introduction of a constitution and the opening of a parliament (*majlis*). This new demand met with support in a large number of towns. The imams and mullahs in Qum declared that if the Shah did not comply with the *bastis* requests they would leave the country. Once again the Shah made various concessions: he dismissed the hated Prime Minister and appointed a new, more liberal successor Mushiru'd Daulah. At the beginning of August elections were announced for the convocation of a *majlis*. The *bastis* then dispersed and the bazaars were opened once more.

Despite the undemocratic nature of the two-stage elections introduced, in which the peasants and hired workers were denied any part, these elections, the first ever in Persian history, caused great excitement among the popular masses, particularly in the towns.

Particularly keen reaction was to be observed in the capital of Persian Azerbaijan, ruled over by the Shah's extremely reactionary son and heir, Mohammed Ali. His attempts to obstruct the elections stirred up the population of Tabriz and the surrounding area. It was in these parts that the first mass social-cum-political orga-

nisations known as *anjunmans* were set up. Soon similar organisations started to spring up all over the country. Merchants, craftsmen, the urban poor and even certain members of the reactionary classes joined them. The actual nature of their activity depended largely on their composition and the proportion of democratic elements. Among the numerous *anjunmans* in the capital there was even one that had been set up by the Kajar princes. However, in the majority of cases these organisations reflected the anti-feudal aspirations of the masses. In many towns the *anjunmans* gained virtual control of local administration.

The influence of the Russian revolution in the Northern provinces was to lead to the emergence, both in these provinces and among the Persians who had left their country for Transcaucasia, of the first secret democratic political organisations—the societies of *mujtahids* (champions of justice). They were joined by traders, craftsmen, peasants, the urban poor, workers and the lower echelons of the religious orders. The *mujtahids* put forward demands for radical bourgeois-democratic reform. Petty-bourgeois elements were to play the leading role in these societies.

In October 1906 the first *majlis* was opened. Despite the undemocratic leanings of the majority of its members, its meetings, which were open to the public, were clearly influenced by the temper of the masses and the activities of the *anjunmans* in the capital. The main task before it was the drawing up of a constitution. At the end of December, shortly before his death, Muzaffar ed-Din ratified the Basic Law drawn up by the *majlis*, which defined its rights and powers.

When the reactionary Shah Mohammed Ali came to the throne he had no desire to heed the *majlis* and still less to ratify amendments to the Basic Law which would have completed the transformation of Persia into a constitutional state. Meanwhile, however, the popular unrest increased in Tabriz and other towns, including the capital. The working masses still in a spontaneous manner tried to present their demands. In the Northern provinces peasant action against the khans and landowners was becoming more and more frequent. In Tehran the electricity and printing workers came out on strike and attempted to set up trade unions.

The conclusion of the Anglo-Russian agreement in August 1907 which divided Persia into two spheres of influence gave still further impetus to the national movement. The *majlis* refused to recognise the agreement and the wave of mass protest grew apace.

Mohammed Ali found himself obliged to ratify the amendments to the Basic Law, although he secretly still had hopes for a counter-revolutionary coup. The Persian constitution introduced bourgeois freedoms and limited the Shah's power by means of the *majlis*, which was given legislative rights, the right to ratify the budget,

foreign loans and concessions. The constitution legalised the *anjunmans* as popularly elected organs empowered to control the activity of the district and provincial authorities. The religious leaders, who had been able to enhance their influence in the country by virtue of their active participation in the revolution at its early stages, secured themselves important privileges via this constitution. A special commission of *ulema* (Moslem theologians, learned men) was granted the right to lay down whether individual laws were compatible with Islam or not.

The transformation of Persia into a constitutional monarchy was a progressive step, yet it did not mean that the Shah and the reactionary nobility were prepared to surrender their former power and privileges.

Once the constitution had been adopted the bourgeoisie, liberal landowners and religious leaders considered that the revolution was over. They were ready to co-operate with a constitutional monarch. However, the Shah, who had brought his loyal forces near the capital, in the autumn of 1907 made his first attempt to carry out a counter-revolutionary coup. The people's *anjunmans* drawn up on the initiative of the *mujtahid* organisations and the *fiday* units (*fidays*—those willing to sacrifice) came out in defence of the constitution. The Tabriz *anjunmans* called for the overthrow of the Shah. The attempt at counter-revolution was defeated. In the meantime the growing activity of the masses was starting to alarm the liberals who were in the majority in the *majlis*. They made a deal with the Shah, who hypocritically swore on the Koran to observe the constitution. By the beginning of June 1908 it became quite clear that another counter-revolutionary coup was being prepared.

While the democratic forces rallied to defend the constitution, the liberal *majlis* called for order and once more tried to come to terms with the Shah. On June 22nd a state of emergency was declared in the capital and on the following day the Cossack brigade, commanded by a Russian colonel by the name of Lyakhov, dissolved the *majlis*. The *fiday* units who rallied to the defence of the *majlis* were crushed by means of artillery. A wave of terror began in Tehran. Left-wing deputies to the *majlis*, numerous leaders of the city's democratic *anjunmans* who had been bold enough to hail the revolution and criticise the Shah, and various journalists and poets were seized and tortured to death or executed.

Yet this coup in Tehran did not signify the end of the revolution. Its main centre was now the insurgent city of Tabriz, which the reactionary forces failed to capture after the June events in the capital. Power in Tabriz was in the hands of the *anjunmans*. Most of the liberals withdrew their support but the *anjunmans*

were reinforced by representatives of the craftsmen, peasants and revolutionary bourgeois elements.

The *anjunmans* relied on the *fiday* units, which had a total strength of about 20,000. The commanders, former peasants and *mujtahid* leaders Sattar and Bagir, organised the defence of the city. Revolutionary order was set up and severe measures were introduced to counter speculation. The Tabriz uprising was of a distinctly revolutionary democratic character.

Revolutionary Developments in China

The awakening of political consciousness and the spread of revolutionary activity to be observed in many countries of the East at this period was to assume particularly impressive proportions in China. National consciousness and patriotism paved the way for the spread of revolutionary ideas not merely among the ranks of the intelligentsia and the students but also among other strata of the population (the national bourgeoisie, progressive workers, etc.). An important role in the propaganda of the ideas of freedom and independence and in the formation of revolutionary organisations was played by Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925).

The spread of revolutionary ideas among Chinese émigrés and students, news of the revolution that had broken out in Russia and numerous outbreaks in China itself made Sun Yat-sen aware of the need to unite all the anti-Manchu organisations in a new mass revolutionary organisation—China Revival Society.

In the spring of 1905, at a meeting of revolutionary Chinese students in Brussels, Sun Yat-sen expounded his famous theory of the Three Principles of the People—Nationalism, Democracy and Livelihood. In the conditions obtaining in China at that time these principles implied the overthrow of the Manchu dynasty, the institution of a democratic republic and the introduction of equal rights of landownership. These principles provided the platform on which the various Chinese revolutionary organisations set up the Chinese Revolutionary League. This party was joined not only by bourgeois-democratic elements, but also by representatives of the national bourgeoisie, some sectors of the more progressive landowners and the revolutionary students, united in their determination to put an end to Manchurian rule in China. Sun Yat-sen was elected President of the Chinese Revolutionary League and at once started preparations for a revolutionary uprising. The Chinese Revolutionary League founded a newspaper called *The People*, which was printed in Tokyo. Lenin welcomed Sun Yat-sen's programme, remarking: "Every line of Sun Yat-sen's platform breathes a spirit of militant and sincere democracy."

The Chinese Revolutionary League started work at a time when the country was already in the grip of revolutionary ferment. In the south and south-west of the country a number of popular uprisings took place in the period 1906-1911. In 1906 the first workers' uprising in the history of China broke out (in the town of Pingsiang, in the province of Kiangsi). In 1907-1908 there were uprisings of peasants, craftsmen and petty-bourgeois elements in the provinces of Kwangtung, Kwangsi, Yunnan and Anhwei. In 1910 peasant uprisings broke out in the Changsha and Shantung provinces. These uprisings all proved unsuccessful due to poor organisation and insufficient liaison with the army and with the masses in other parts of the country.

Sun Yat-sen and the League which he led, took an active part in the organisation of all this revolutionary activity, sending out its representatives to the scene of all such outbreaks and organising supplies of arms and money, etc. Drawing on the experience of the recent setbacks, the League stepped up its propaganda among the soldiers of the "modern troops" (units organised on the European model). In response to an appeal by Sun Yat-sen most of the members of the League, and in particular its student members, joined the army in order to spread revolutionary propaganda among the soldiers.

A soldiers' uprising in Kwangchow in 1910 failed, however, since the League had not yet learned to abandon conspiratorial tactics. On April 28, 1911, another uprising was organised by the soldiers who had proved receptive to the revolutionaries' propaganda. The insurgents seized the residence of the local Manchurian governor, but the government troops were too strong for them, and after putting up a heroic resistance against overwhelming odds the insurgents were crushed. All prisoners were summarily executed. The bodies of 72 soldiers who had been killed in the fighting or executed were gathered by the local population and buried on the Huanghuakang hill just outside Kwangchow. Later an obelisk was erected on this common grave in memory of that heroic exploit. "After that last defeat of the Kwangtung uprising," wrote Sun Yat-sen, "the number of supporters for the revolution started to grow from day to day."

At the end of 1908 Emperor Kuang-Hsu and his consort Empress died almost simultaneously, and Kuang-Hsu's two-year-old nephew Pu-yi was proclaimed Emperor. Power was now in the hands of the Manchurian nobles led by princes Chin and Ch'un (Pu-yi's father). Chinese nobles were denied all high offices of state.

This aroused deep discontent among the Chinese bourgeoisie and landowners. Subterfuge and manoeuvring on the part of the government, which introduced certain reforms (the setting up of provincial consultative committees, reorganisation of the education sys-

tem, etc.), and promised that in time a constitutional monarchy would be set up, did not prove sufficient to keep this discontent in check this time. The government kept putting off the convocation of a parliament and revolution drew nearer and nearer.

The Hsin Hai Revolution of 1911-1913

On May 9, 1911, the government issued a decree nationalising existing railways and the construction of new ones in the provinces of Hupeh, Hunan and Kwangtung. This was a hard blow for the Chinese bourgeoisie who had been organising its own railway construction projects. On May 20 the construction of railways was handed over to a banking consortium backed up by US, British, French and German capital. This step in open defiance of Chinese national interests aroused indignation throughout the country. On September 7, 1911, the governor of the province of Zechwan, Chao Erh-feng, reacted by arresting the leaders of the movement set up to uphold the interests of the shareholders who had been severely hit by the nationalisation of the railway construction. This action was the last straw and in Chengtu, the provincial centre, a large-scale uprising broke out. The governor was killed and his head was impaled on a pole which bore the inscription "While alive you enjoyed looking down on people—now you may continue to do so dead."

The Chinese Revolutionary League sent its representatives to Zechwan to co-ordinate the activities of the insurgents. In October 1911, an engineers battalion mutinied in Wuchang, where representatives of the League and other underground revolutionary organisations had been active.

On October 11, 1911, the consultative committee in the province of Hupeh collaborated with the insurgents and proclaimed China a republic. After these events in Wuchang, revolutionary power was also set up in Hankow and Hanyang. A provisional revolutionary government was set up and a revolutionary army formed, which workers, peasants and former soldiers flocked to join. The revolutionary army was widely supported throughout the country. The example of Wuchang inspired other towns and regions to follow suit.

It was the workers and peasants and the poorer and middle sections of the bourgeoisie who formed the core of this revolutionary movement. However it was mainly landowners and members of the comprador bourgeoisie posing as revolutionaries who seized power in the provinces. They went out of their way to check the revolutionary activity of the masses so as to confine the revolution to the overthrow of the Manchu dynasty.



Sun Yat-sen. Photograph

In December 1911, after long years in exile Sun Yat-sen returned to China and was given an ecstatic welcome in Shanghai. On December 29, 1911, the representatives of 17 provinces elected him President of the Republic in Nanking. The republic was eventually proclaimed on January 1, 1912. In his manifesto to the people, Sun Yat-sen wrote: "I vow to root out the poisonous remnants of autocracy, to set up a republic, to act in the interests of the people's welfare in order to carry out the main aim of the revolution and to translate into reality the aspirations and hopes of the people." However in this proclamation a number of points contained in the original programme of the Chinese Revolutionary League were conspicuous by their absence, in particular the demand for equal rights of landownership. Sun Yat-sen still lacked sufficient confidence in the strength of the popular masses and had not drawn up a clear programme of democratic reforms. A lack of consistency was also to be observed in his foreign policy programme. While stressing in his appeal to the foreign powers that China henceforth was to be independent and strong and enjoy the same rights and privileges as the imperialist powers, Sun Yat-sen asked

the latter to help China achieve this goal. Sun Yat-sen's government represented a bloc of bourgeois revolutionaries, officials of the old bureaucracy and liberals, in which the liberals predominated.

The predominance of the liberals moulded the subsequent policies of the new government. No measures to change the basis of the country's socio-economic structure or to do away with feudalism and imperialist domination were introduced, so that the demands of the popular masses remained unsatisfied. The government was set on confining the revolution within a strictly bourgeois framework.

Meanwhile the bourgeoisie and the landowners in Peking, also set on checking the revolutionary tide, took steps to liquidate the monarchy: Pu-yi abdicated and the other members of the royal house then followed suit. The liberal landowners and the bourgeoisie, alarmed by the scale and power of the revolutionary movement, started rallying to the support of the political schemer Yüan Shih-k'ai who was appointed commander-in-chief of all the counter-revolutionary forces. The imperialist powers were putting more and more pressure on the Chinese government, threatening direct intervention.

The imperialists came out in open support of Yüan Shih-k'ai. In order to avert civil war and foreign intervention on February 14, 1912 Sun Yat-sen resigned the presidency in favour of Yüan Shih-k'ai.

Yüan Shih-k'ai moved the seat of the government from Nanking in the revolutionary south to Peking, where the forces of reaction had large bodies of troops at their disposal. The peasants, whose position had not improved as a result of this revolution, started to revolt against the landowners, demanding land and more moderate rents. The working class also took up arms once again. However, these isolated outbreaks were soon crushed by Yüan Shih-k'ai's troops. His policies met with the approval of the imperialists, and the international banking consortium granted him a large loan. On August 25, 1912, Sun Yat-sen and a number of other former leaders of the Chinese Revolutionary League together with some of the liberals founded a new party, the Kuomintang (National Party). Their programme contained no reference to the principle of equal rights of landownership, and the other principles of the programme of the League were formulated in less resolute and less revolutionary terms; so the new programme represented a step backwards. Yet even this modified version was not to the liking of Yüan Shih-k'ai and he started to subject the members of the Kuomintang to bitter persecution.

In July 1913, Sun Yat-sen appealed to the people to start a "second revolution". The troops in some southern provinces rallied

to his call, but the people, disillusioned after the outcome of the first revolution, did not come to the support of the insurgent soldiers, who were soon routed by Yüan Shih-k'ai's army. The Kuomintang was then banned and Sun Yat-sen and other leaders were obliged to emigrate. Thus reaction had won the day.

It was the Chinese landowners and the comprador bourgeoisie that benefitted from the fruits of the revolution. The masses, and in particular the peasantry, gained no land or liberties, which they had fought for so selflessly for years.

Nevertheless, the revolution did serve to inject new life into the struggle of the Chinese people for national independence and social emancipation. The Prague Conference of the Bolsheviks in 1912 called attention to the "world-wide importance of the revolutionary struggle of the Chinese people, which is bringing emancipation of Asia and is undermining the rule of the European bourgeoisie".

The Liberation Struggle of the Peoples of Latin America

The dawn of imperialism brought in its wake a new wave of expansion of foreign capital in the countries of Latin America. By that time the Latin American countries had made significant advances and in some of them a national bourgeoisie and a working class had emerged. In several countries (such as Argentina, Mexico, Brazil and Chile) capitalist patterns in agriculture were making rapid headway, and a stratum of capitalist landowners emerged. However, this process of progressive national development was held back by vestiges of feudalism and the penetration of foreign capital. The imperialist monopolies sought to make of these countries convenient sources of raw materials and spheres of capital investment. This led to the distortion of the economy of the Latin American countries so that they soon became one-crop countries. Cuba became South America's major sugar producer, Brazil provided coffee, Argentina meat, Bolivia tin and Mexico silver and oil. The imperialist countries supported the reactionary bourgeois-landowner cliques that held sway in the countries of Latin America.

Yet neither the rule of local oligarchies, nor the domination of foreign capital were able to stop the clock of history and hold up progress. Despite the efforts of the foreign monopolists national capitalism started to make small beginnings and new classes and social forces emerged. Among the progressive sectors of the national bourgeoisie and the capitalist landowners the conviction gained ground that without the liquidation of semi-feudal oligarchies and the uprooting of the domination of foreign capital it

would be impossible to ensure untrammelled and rapid economic and political development.

At the turn of the century the tasks of liquidating feudal patterns on the one hand and foreign domination on the other became interdependent and the national liberation movements of the Latin American peoples assumed an anti-feudal and anti-imperialist character.

The Mexican Revolution—1910-1917

The most dramatic manifestation of these developments was the Mexican revolution of 1910-1917, which was the most momentous event in the history of the whole of Latin America since the Wars of Liberation. This was the first Latin American revolution in the course of which the people tried to put an end to obsolete feudal practices and imperialist domination.

As a result of the policies pursued by the dictator General Porfirio Diaz, which were quite incompatible with the national interests, by the beginning of the twentieth century Mexico had been turned into a semi-colony of Britain and the USA. Porfirio Diaz and his followers maintained that Mexico could only become a developed country with the help of wide-scale foreign investment. British and American companies had acquired concessions on preferential terms for the construction of railways and the opening of mines. Vast territories by this time were in the hands of the foreign companies and the local latifundists.

When enormous oil deposits were discovered at the beginning of the twentieth century, British and American oil companies went all out to gain possession of them.

Peasants were robbed of their land to such an extent that soon in some states 98-99% of them were without any land at all. The popular masses found themselves exposed not only to the exploitation of the local oligarchy led by the dictator Diaz but to that of the foreign monopolies as well.

Class contradictions had become extremely acute by the autumn of 1910, when a peasant guerilla movement started up in order to fight for land. It was led by the legendary champions of the peasants' cause Emiliano Zapata (c. 1877-1919) and Pancho (Francisco) Villa (1877-1923). The newly born Mexican proletariat also came out in protest against the unbridled exploitation to which they were subjected. The national bourgeoisie and the capitalist landowners tried to overthrow the Diaz clique which was consistently selling the country's resources to foreign imperialists.

The revolution began in October, 1910. In May 1911, the dictatorship was overthrown and a new government was set up under the leadership of the popular liberal leader, Francisco Madero. In

February 1913, Madero was murdered and it emerged that the US Ambassador had had a hand in the plot. Power was seized by a reactionary clique led by General Victoriano Huerta. In July 1914, however the people succeeded in overthrowing this usurper.

The revolution entered a new phase. The broad masses now entered the struggle, determining its course and giving it a democratic character. In the course of the struggle, the peasant armies together with the peasants from the regions caught up in the revolutionary tide were carrying out an agrarian revolution. The initiative and activity of the people alarmed the liberals whose interests were upheld by their leader Venustiano Carranza who set about the task of liquidating the peasant armies led by Zapata and Villa. The revolution also threatened the interests of the foreign monopolies, and on two separate occasions (in 1914 and 1917) the United States organised armed intervention aimed at crushing the Mexican revolution, which failed due to the determined resistance of the Mexican people. The aggressive policy of the United States with regard to revolutionary Mexico aroused the anger and indignation of the peoples of Latin America who declared their solidarity with the Mexican revolutionaries.

The Mexican revolution was an anti-feudal and anti-imperialist revolution and this lent it a bourgeois-democratic character. The masses did not emerge victorious from the struggle due to the failure of the proletariat and the peasantry to ally with one another. The proletariat was not yet in a position to lead the revolutionary movement, and the bourgeoisie assumed the leading role instead. Side by side with the people the bourgeoisie defied the Diaz dictatorship and the oligarchy of the bishops, powerful landowners and foreign imperialists. Yet once it became evident that its class interests clashed with those of the peasantry and the proletariat, it came out resolutely against the popular masses. As a result, in the course of the civil war which lasted from 1915 to 1917, the alliance of the bourgeoisie and the landowners eventually succeeded in crushing the peasant armies and then suppressing the uprisings of the proletariat.

The Mexican revolution did away with the reactionary Diaz dictatorship, dealt a serious blow at the power of the church and weakened the hold of foreign capital on the country. By doing so it consolidated a new bourgeois order, paved the way for more rapid capitalist development and enhanced Mexico's national sovereignty. In the eyes of the peoples of Latin America, Mexico had become the symbol of the struggle against imperialism. Another outcome of the revolution was the Constitution of 1917, which reflected the anti-feudal and anti-imperialist aspirations of the revolutionary movement. This constitution was the most democratic of all the bourgeois constitutions the world had yet seen. However,

it must be borne in mind that it did not represent actual revolutionary gains but was rather a programme of what the people had still to struggle to achieve. Moreover, since it was the alliance of the bourgeoisie and the landowning class that had taken over the government of the country and was to implement this constitution, many of its articles have not been carried out to this day.

The Mexican revolution marked the end of an important stage in the national liberation movement in Latin America, a stage distinguished by the fact that while it was people who bore the brunt of the fighting, made the most sacrifices and endured the severest privations it was not they, but the ruling classes which enjoyed the fruits of the struggle. The basic tasks—to smash imperialist domination, do away with the latifundias and overthrow reactionary regimes—had not yet been completed.

Revolutionary and Opportunist Trends in the International Labour Movement

The first Russian revolution of 1905-1907 was the first of a whole series of violent class battles that took place in almost all the large capitalist states of Europe.

Mass strikes characterised by a high degree of militancy, took place in Sweden in 1909, in Britain in 1912, and in Belgium in 1913. At times the struggle of the proletariat assumed a particularly determined character, as was the case with the anti-militarist workers' demonstrations in Spain in 1909, when barricades were set up in the streets of Barcelona. In the summer of 1914 there were barricades and street battles in Milan, Venice and other towns of Italy. The peasants rallied to the help of the workers, ransacking arsenals and police barracks. For a whole week the country was paralysed by a general strike, that later came to be known as "Red Week".

The proletariat of Russia still provided the main inspiration for the international labour movement as it had done ever since 1905. Now that they had recovered from reactionary reprisals, the Russian workers started after 1910 to organise offensive strikes instead of defensive ones. The massacre of strikers at the Lena goldfields in Eastern Siberia in 1912 led to a great wave of protest throughout the country. A new wave of revolutionary fervour found its expression in a rapid growth of the strike movement in all the main industrial centres of the country. Rallies and street demonstrations organised by the strikers became common occurrences. In the summer of 1914 barricades appeared on the streets of St. Petersburg and fighting between workers and the police became more and more frequent. Russia was again on the threshold of a nation-wide political strike.

Thus it can be seen the deepening class contradictions in the capitalist countries during the imperialist era resulted in increasing revolutionary activity on the part of the masses. This in its turn fostered the revolutionary trend in the international socialist movement. At the beginning of the twentieth century, prior to the First World War it was to come to play an increasingly important role in all the European countries.

In Russia a party of a new type was founded that differed from the other parties of the Second International in its unmistakable revolutionary essence. In Germany the Left wing of the Social-Democratic Party led by Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg consolidated its ranks and in Bulgaria a separate party of Left or *Tesnyaki* socialists was formed under the leadership of Dimitr Blagoev. In the ranks of the French socialists the number of those who were opposed to collaboration with bourgeois parties also grew apace.

Yet at the same time another, opportunist trend was growing up within the international socialist movement. The social basis of this trend was provided by the so-called workers' aristocracy. This upper stratum of the European proletariat was bought over by the capitalists prepared to sacrifice to this end a fraction of their superprofits acquired by means of colonial plunder. It goes without saying that the workers belonging to this particular group corrupted by sops from their masters had no vested interest in the disappearance of the capitalist order. They tried to wrest partial concessions from the bourgeoisie not by struggling against this class but by collaborating with it. Moreover, as socialist ideas gained increasing popularity, the international socialist movement was to acquire fellow-travellers from the ranks of the petty bourgeoisie. These latter additions to the socialist parties gave rise to anti-proletarian deviations and also helped the opportunist leaders to consolidate their influence in the movement.

As far back as the close of the nineteenth century, soon after the death of Frederick Engels (1895), one of the leading German Social-Democrats, Eduard Bernstein, came out in favour of the revision of allegedly outdated Marxism, proposing that the idea of socialist revolution should be replaced by that of peaceful reformist activity. During the first Russian revolution many leaders of the Second International were unwilling to recognise its international significance and showed no eagerness to study and adapt the experience of the struggle waged by the Russian proletariat.

The defeat of the revolution in Russia was made use of by the opportunists to pour scorn and condemnation on the very principle of proletarian revolutionary struggle and to point to the superiority of reformist methods.

The growing opportunist influence in the Second International found its expression in the refusal of some of its leaders to take up the struggle against militarism and the threat of imperialist war, which had been increasingly evident ever since about 1905. At the congresses of the Second International opportunists from the ranks of the German and Belgian Social-Democrats openly assumed the role of apologists of colonialism, advocating the need for colonies not only under capitalism but under socialism as well. Dutch and British opportunist leaders also joined them in extolling the "civilising mission" of the imperialist powers.

The Bolsheviks' Struggle Against Opportunism

Being convinced revolutionary Marxists active in a country on the threshold of revolution, the Russian Bolsheviks did not hesitate to condemn the revisionist principles put forward by Bernstein. In his exposure of reformist illusions with regard to the gradual smoothing out of the contradictions inherent in capitalism, Lenin upheld the basic principles of Marx's economic theory and his theory of socialist revolution. At the same time he laid emphasis on the creative essence of Marxism and the need to develop this theory still further in the light of the new conditions pertaining to the era of imperialism.

A bitter battle against opportunism was waged by Lenin and his supporters in Russia itself. In their efforts to set up a united proletarian party the Russian revolutionary Marxists came up against opposition from the Economists, who denied the need for an independent political party of the proletariat, strictly confining the latter's tasks to trade union, economic struggle against the capitalists.

While in exile in Siberia (1897-1900) Lenin had condemned Economism as a form of revisionism. *Iskra*, a Party paper founded by Lenin, untiringly exposed the opportunist essence of Economism. Lenin's *What Is To Be Done?* published in 1902 was to play a decisive role in the ideological defeat of the Economists.

After the Second Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, the Bolsheviks were obliged to wage a long fight against the opportunist policies pursued by the Mensheviks, who held that the main role in the revolution that was about to break out in Russia should be played by the bourgeoisie and who therefore called upon the proletariat to come to terms with the bourgeoisie.

In the difficult conditions that obtained after the defeat of the 1905 revolution when reaction held sway, the Bolsheviks had had to consolidate the existing underground revolutionary organisa-

tions in the face of Menshevik attempts to do away with the illegal party. In 1912, at a Party conference held in Prague the Menshevik liquidators were expelled from the Party, and a Central Committee headed by Lenin was elected.

The Russian revolutionary Marxists fought with similar determination against opportunist trends in the Second International. At international socialist congresses Lenin levelled severe criticism at the opportunist leaders, particularly as regards their stand on the approaching imperialist war. During these congresses Lenin organised special meetings of Left Social-Democrats, sparing no effort to unite their ranks in the struggle against opportunism.

The Bolshevik Party was the only large-scale workers' party in the world which never compromised the principles of proletarian internationalism. From 1912-1914 Lenin frequently spoke out in defence of the Party's revolutionary programme with regard to the nationalities' question, which held aloft the right of nations to self-determination including the right to secession. Fiercely condemning attempts by the opportunists to justify the colonial policies of the imperialist powers, Lenin pointed out the tremendous significance for the proletarian cause of the national liberation movement in the colonial and dependent countries.

Chapter Eighteen

THE FIRST WORLD WAR AND THE OVERTHROW OF TSARISM IN RUSSIA

Europe on the Verge of War

At the turn of the century rivalry and conflicts between the Great Powers at the imperialist stage of capitalism approached breaking point. There was very little room left for colonial expansion since these powers had already divided most of the world between them, and a keen struggle developed for "spheres of influence". A series of international crises, all threatening to boil over into a general world conflict, reflected mounting political tension round the globe.

England's openly aggressive war against the Boer republics of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State from 1899 to 1902 ended in their annexation. In 1900, the European powers along with Japan and the USA intervened in China. In 1904, the bloody Russo-Japanese War broke out, and the following year German efforts to halt French expansion in Morocco seriously strained relations between the two powers. Austria-Hungary's annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1908 threatened to develop into a general European conflict. In 1911, a second Moroccan crisis arose between France and Germany, the latter sending the gunboat *Panther* to Moroccan waters (the Agadir crisis), as a show of force designed to discourage France from her penetration of Morocco, which by this time was anyway virtually completed. In 1912 to 1913 Europe was shaken by the two Balkan wars. Behind the small countries taking part stood the might of the Great Powers, divided into two hostile camps.

The final line-up of forces had already taken shape. On the one hand stood the Triple Alliance, made up of Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy, on the other the Triple Entente composed of Britain, France and Russia.

Both camps were actively preparing for war, engaging in a keen arms race and vying with one another in the field of diplomacy to secure valuable allies. Germany did her best to woo Russia away from Britain and France, while France was more successful in her efforts to secure Italy's withdrawal from the Triple Alliance.

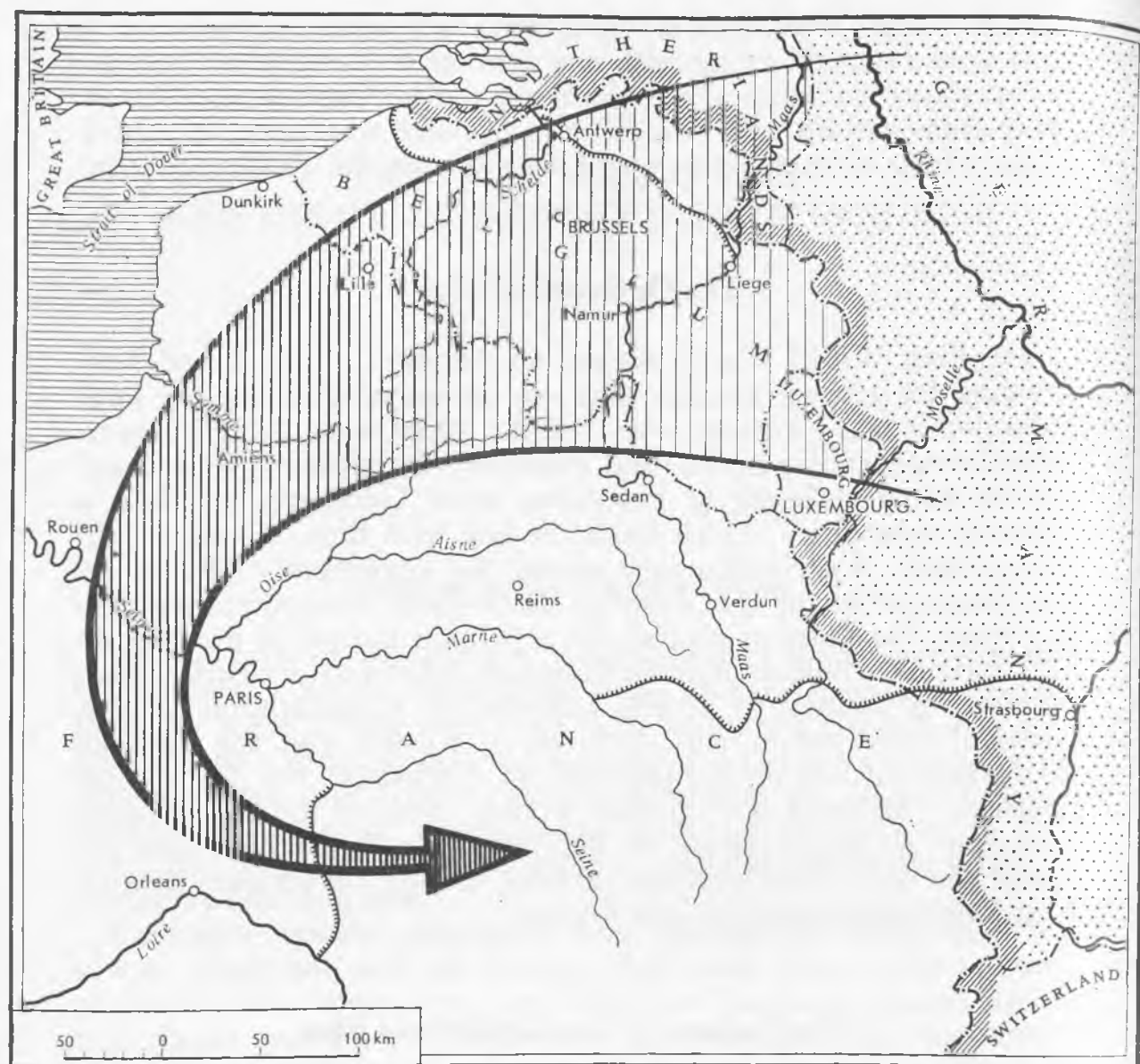
The Outbreak of War

The First World War broke out on August 1, 1914. It had been brewing for several decades and was an imperialist war for both sides, but it was Germany who took the initiative in declaring war. The German ruling circles, and especially the military, were eager for an early outbreak of hostilities, since Germany then had a military superiority, which might be lost with time. Germany and her partner Austria-Hungary seized the opportunity offered by the assassination of the Austrian Arch-Duke Franz-Ferdinand in Sarajevo, the Bosnian capital, by a Serbian patriot to provoke an international conflict. Austria-Hungary delivered a clearly unacceptable ultimatum to Serbia, followed by a declaration of war. General mobilisation was declared in Russia, and the German declaration of war on her followed on August 1st. On August 3rd, Germany declared war against France, and on the 4th invaded Belgium. At the violation of Belgian neutrality Britain also entered the war. The German armies quickly overcame Belgian resistance and pressed on into France.

The Failure of Von Schlieffen's Plan

The German High Command followed a plan which had been carefully prepared eight or nine years previously by General Alfred von Schlieffen. The plan was for a lightning war to eliminate the enemy on the Western Front in four to six weeks and then concentrate on victory on the Eastern Front in roughly the same period. The aim was to avoid a war on two fronts simultaneously by fighting a lightning war on each front in turn. Total victory was to be achieved by the fall.

At first everything seemed to point to the plan succeeding. The main forces of the German army advanced across Belgium and deep into France, and by September were approaching Paris, having reached the Marne. The French Government was hastily evacuated to Bordeaux. It seemed that all was lost. But just when the Germans were about to celebrate victory, their plans were suddenly upset. The arrogant German High Command had been



GENERAL SCHEME OF GERMAN OFFENSIVE IN THE WEST ACCORDING TO THE SCHLIEFFEN PLAN

contemptuous of Russia's ability to mobilise her armies in a short space of time and have them ready for action; these German calculations, however, were to prove ill-founded since the Russian mobilisation was carried out rapidly and following a request from the French High Command, alarmed at the German invasion, Russian armies invaded Eastern Prussia at the end of August, and at the same time advanced against Austria-Hungary, occupying Lvov on September 3rd.

Meanwhile a major confrontation between the French armies under General Joffre and the advancing German troops took place on the Marne on September 5th-12th. The Germans, anxious at

the Russian advance into Prussia, transferred two and a half corps to the Eastern Front, which led to a Russian defeat. But the German strength on the Marne was considerably weakened, and the French not only succeeded in holding the line but soon launched a massive counter-offensive causing the Germans to retreat.

Thanks to the propitious help afforded France by the Russians, the German advance in the West was halted, Paris was saved and von Schlieffen's plan for a lightning war was foiled. It was now clear that the war would be a long, protracted struggle. The fronts hardened and trench warfare began, and the opposing armies settled down to a war of attrition which would be won by the side with the greatest military and economic might.

The Collapse of the Second International

The war was a severe blow to the international labour movement. The Second International and socialist parties in various countries had been opposing militarism and trying to avert the danger of war for many years. But the working class was not strong enough to prevent the imperialist bourgeoisie from unleashing war. The forces of reaction were merciless in their suppression of the anti-military proletarian leaders. The French socialist leader Jean Jaurès was treacherously murdered for his anti-war activities, as early as July 31st, 1914.

The main cause of the working class's weakness was the decisive role opportunists had come to play in the majority of socialist parties and in the leadership of the Second International. On August 4th, 1914, the strongest party in the Second International, the German Social-Democrats, voted war credits to the government, despite a previously taken decision to the contrary, thereby betraying the very principles of internationalism and allying themselves with their national bourgeoisie and militarist clique. The French, Belgian and Austrian socialists and the Russian Mensheviks did likewise. The International Socialist Bureau, the leadership of the International, proved completely powerless in this hour of crisis, and virtually ceased its activities.

All this signified in effect the collapse of the Second International. The major member parties ignored the decisions they had themselves taken at the congresses, and the International was split into three opposed groupings: the socialists of the German bloc, the socialists of the Entente bloc and the socialists of the neutral countries.

The Bolsheviks' Struggle Against the War, for a Revolutionary Outcome of the Crisis

The Bolsheviks were the only party that remained true to the principles of proletarian internationalism. Five Bolshevik deputies who spoke against the war in the Duma were arrested and exiled to Siberia. In September 1914, Lenin, then in Switzerland, proposed a new programme for revolutionary struggle in war conditions. He was the first socialist to define the war that had started as an imperialist war and brand the behaviour of the leaders of the Second International as a betrayal of the proletarian cause. He found an answer to the questions tormenting every honest socialist at the time, every worker, every one of the oppressed: what was to be done? which path to choose?

The war brought the people incalculable hardships. Millions of ordinary people, workers and peasants, lost their lives on the numerous fronts so that the factory owners, landowners, generals and high officials might line their already well-lined pockets still more. Their wives and children, deprived of their breadwinners, were left to go hungry. Lenin and the other Bolsheviks realised that the masses were longing for an end to this appalling state of affairs, and shared the people's desire for peace.

The question was: what kind of peace should be the aim? Peace between the imperialist powers? Lenin rejected outright this solution, which would merely mean an interruption of hostilities and the continuation of oppression for the masses, so that all the sacrifices would have been in vain. Such a peace would merely be a truce, and before long the imperialists would once more be sending workers and peasants off to the slaughter.

In order to assure an enduring peace and make further wars impossible, or at least reduce the danger of their occurring, the cause of war must be removed: imperialism must be overthrown.

Was this possible? Or was it merely a utopian dream? This was the view of many of Lenin's opponents, the socialists serving the imperialist cause and calling on the people to come to terms with their national bourgeoisies.

But Lenin demonstrated that the imperialist war provided the ideal conditions for the overthrow of imperialism. Why? Because the war greatly worsened the plight of the masses, and bringing about sharp rises in prices condemned them to hunger and privation, thereby causing a serious crisis in the majority of European countries. This crisis would become more and more serious as the war went on, and would serve to galvanise the revolutionary ardour of the masses. How should this crisis be resolved, how should it be used by the class-conscious proletarians? And Lenin answered these questions.



Jean Jaurès. Photograph

The ruling classes had found it necessary to arm the people. They had given the workers and peasants rifles for the purpose of killing one another. But these rifles could and should be turned in another direction, against the capitalists, landowners and colonialists, against the forces of imperialism.

Thus Lenin came to devise his most important political slogan of the war years: the imperialist war should be transformed into a civil war. In other words, the war should be brought to a stop by overthrowing imperialism.

Lenin's Theory of Socialist Revolution

It was quite natural that in the years of the imperialist war, when Lenin was urging the working class of Russia and other countries to turn the war into a revolutionary struggle, he should have elaborated and perfected the basic principle of his theory of

socialist revolution. The struggle for socialist revolution was then in the order of the day.

Lenin wrote several important works during the war years, including *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, and *The Military Programme of the Proletarian Revolution*. Taking into account all the latest features of capitalism at the imperialist stage, he elaborated the tactics and strategy for the proletariat to follow in the new historical conditions. On the basis of the doctrine of Marx and Engels, Lenin produced a new theory of socialist revolution applicable in the age of imperialism.

Lenin advanced two new principles of fundamental importance. The first was that the socialist revolution could not triumph in all countries simultaneously in view of the fact that the various countries were at different stages of economic and political development. The victory of socialism was possible first in a few or even in one single country. The second new principle was that the proletariat would acquire new allies in its struggle against imperialism. To the peasantry, which had already become the ally of the proletariat in the capitalist countries, would be added the anti-imperialist forces of the oppressed peoples of colonial and dependent countries. The struggle of the working class against imperialism coincided with the liberation struggle of the oppressed peoples against imperialism, swelling the forces of the anti-imperialist movement.

These theories had an immense practical value, opening up new prospects for the working class in the revolutionary struggle.

The War Spreads

The imperialist war which had begun as a European conflict in 1914 soon developed into a world war. The number of belligerent countries increased rapidly. Bulgaria and Turkey were drawn into the war on the side of the Central powers, led by Germany with her vast military might and dreams of world domination.

More and more countries were joining the war on the side of the Triple Entente powers. Serbia, Belgium, and subsequently and at different times Japan, Italy, Rumania, and the United States, and several other countries declared war on the Central powers. All continents were involved, but in Europe, the main theatre of the struggle, little progress was made by either side. The struggle had developed into a positional war, with appallingly costly battles being waged for every yard of ground. The Battle of Verdun in 1916, for instance, after months of heavy fighting in which casualties on both sides were atrociously high, ended in a stalemate. No less costly and futile than the slaughter at Verdun were

the battles on the Somme in the summer of 1916. The Germans did achieve several victories on the Eastern Front in 1915, but failed in their main aim to eliminate Russia from the war. As the war dragged on, it became more and more obvious that the victors would be the side with the greatest economic might. Despite her temporary victories, the ultimate defeat of Germany was only a question of time.

The war caused unprecedented damage to the productive forces. The flower of Europe's manhood, ten million men killed and over twenty million wounded—such was the atrocious toll in human lives. Industry in the belligerent countries was completely geared to the war effort, and production of consumer goods fell off sharply. Food and clothing prices soared, and in many countries the working people suffered great privations, and later hunger.

The Revolutionary Crisis Mounts

Monopolists, industrialists, bankers and various breeds of speculator amassed colossal fortunes out of the war. Arms production and the supply of food and clothing to the millions under arms brought in vast profits. But while the bourgeoisie were prospering from the war, it brought general impoverishment to the ordinary people in almost all the belligerent countries. As early as 1915 there could be noticed a marked sobering up in the outlook of the masses which had been caught up by the wave of jingoism in the first months of the war. At the end of 1914 Karl Liebknecht had openly condemned the war, and was the only Social-Democrat deputy in the Reichstag to vote against the granting of war credits. He and Rosa Luxemburg headed a group of revolutionary internationalists within the Social-Democratic Party which called themselves the Spartacus Group and waged a bold campaign against the war and its supporters in Germany. In Bulgaria opposition to the war was expressed by the *Tesnyaki* under Vasil Kolarov, Dimitr Blagoev and Georgi Dimitrov. Gradually the Left internationalists mounted the struggle in all countries.

The Bolsheviks' Struggle for Left Internationalist Unity

With the shift to the left among the masses various opportunist, so-called Centrist elements became more active in the ranks of the Social-Democratic parties. Centrism was a covert form of opportunism practised by people posing as revolutionaries. The chief Centrists during the war years were Kautsky in Germany, Mac-

Donald in England, Longuet in France, and Martov and Trotsky in Russia. Many of the waverers, dissatisfied with the policy of the ruling classes but not yet having reached full revolutionary awareness, followed the Centrists.

In September 1915, the first international conference of socialists opposed to the imperialist war and the chauvinistic policies of the official Social-Democratic leadership was held in the Swiss village of Zimmerwald. The delegates included Centrists, socialists with Centrist leanings, and Left internationalists, among them Lenin.

Lenin came to the conference because it represented the first step towards a break with the chauvinistic socialist leadership. His main aim was to unite the Left internationalists, and in this he met with partial success. Out of this conference emerged what was called the Zimmerwald Left, a loose grouping of internationalist, anti-war socialists, the embryo out of which the Third International was to grow.

In April 1916, the Zimmerwald International Socialist Committee held another conference in the Swiss town of Kienthal. Thanks to Lenin's tireless efforts to unite the Left internationalists, the Zimmerwald Left was much stronger than at the previous meeting, and the decisions taken at the conference represented an important step forward in the ideological sense.

The Effect of the War on the Colonial Countries

The war had important effects on all the colonial and dependent countries. The imperialist powers used their colonies and dependencies as a reserve in the struggle against their enemy. In Africa and India forced conscription of soldiers for the Western Front was carried out, and tens of thousands of Vietnamese were transported to France to dig trenches and work behind the lines. The war at sea, and in particular German submarine activity, had interrupted the normal trading links between Asia and the European metropolitan countries, while the latter were anyway no longer able to supply their colonies with all the industrial goods they had hitherto sold them.

The United States and Japan were to reap particular benefit from this situation, and their exports to the European colonies in Asia increased considerably. Japan, apart from strengthening her economic and political influence in China, began energetic penetration of Siam, Indonesia and the Philippines.

Turkey, who had joined the Central powers on the eve of the war, was totally dependent on Germany. Iran, who had declared

her neutrality, became the scene of fierce rivalry between the two belligerent camps.

Germany tried to use Iran's quarrels with England and Russia to gain the support of factions in opposition to the Shah, infiltrating the country with spies and saboteurs, in an effort to bring to a halt Iranian oil shipments to England. She sent military missions via Iran to Afghanistan, with the aim of provoking trouble on the Afghano-Indian border.

Iran also became the scene of fighting between the Russian army and a German-Turkish expeditionary force. The fighting in northern Iran was like a continuation of the Russo-Turkish front in Transcaucasia. In the course of the war, British and Russian efforts to combat Germany's activities in Iran led to her becoming more and more of a colonial dependency of the two powers.

The war greatly worsened the plight of the peoples of Asia and Africa. The curtailment of the market for agricultural produce brought the peasantry great hardship. In the villages and especially in the towns prices soared. Meanwhile the national bourgeoisie of these countries prospered since, fearing increased Japanese and American invasion of their markets, the European powers sought to encourage the expansion of local industry, and particularly light industry.

With the worsening of the living conditions of the masses in the majority of Asian countries, popular unrest became widespread. Numerous peasant uprisings broke out, often under religious sectarian banners.

An important role in the growing national liberation movement was played by the local bourgeoisie, demanding participation in government and increased economic opportunities.

At its congress in Lucknow the Indian National Congress demanded immediate wide powers of self-government, the opening of senior army posts to Indians, customs autonomy and control over the state finances. These demands were also supported by the Moslem League which held a congress in Lucknow at the same time. Indian Home-Rule Leagues were formed for the promulgation of this programme.

In Indonesia, the Union of Islam developed in the war years to become a mass organisation. The leading role was to be played by the revolutionary petty bourgeoisie and those connected with the Social-Democratic Union, founded by the Dutch Left-wing Social-Democratic Tribune Party. At its congress in 1916, and particularly at the one in October 1917, the Union of Islam sharply criticised Dutch imperialism and its reactionary lackeys in the country.

The 1917 congress adopted a resolution condemning "evil capitalism". Numerous trade unions grew up during the war years,

and the workers became more vociferous in their demands for better living and labour conditions.

In the Philippines, the bourgeoisie and liberal landowners whose strength had increased in the course of the war intensified their demands for independence and were actively supported by the working masses.

In French Indochina discontent mounted among all strata of society, and peasant revolts against forced conscriptions and excessive requisitions in some places took the form of an armed struggle. In 1916, a peasant army advanced on Saigon, managing to seize the town and hold it for a while, and destroy the prison. In many districts the peasants succeeded in taking back recruits conscripted by force. Many of the feudal lords likewise openly expressed their discontent. A conspiracy led by the young Emperor Dhui-Tan was formed in Hué and took advantage of the weakening of French garrison troops, which had largely been transferred to the Western Front, to instigate an uprising in 1916. But the majority of feudal lords were not prepared to offer it their support and the rising lacked popular roots. The revolt was crushed and Dhui-Tan was made prisoner and exiled to the island of Concorde. A puppet emperor, loyal to the imperialists, was placed on the throne, and although outbursts of popular revolt continued, they lacked the necessary organisation and leadership.

The imperialists were forced to resort to complicated tactics and manoeuvres to deal with the national liberation movement and curb revolutionary disturbances. The colonial powers made all sorts of wild promises for the purpose of securing the support and obedience of the national bourgeoisie and the wealthy classes. Jones's Law, passed by the US Congress in 1916, increased the participation of Filipinos in the government of their country and promised the Philippines self-government in the near future.

In the Montague Declaration, delivered to the House of Commons by the British Minister for Indian Affairs, England promised India gradual transfer to dominion status. At the same time similar promises were made in India by the Vice-Roy, Lord Chelmsford. Also in 1916, Indonesia was promised a representative organ, the National Council.

Various manoeuvres taking into account popular demands were also resorted to in the case of the Arab countries. England did her utmost to weaken the Ottoman Empire and further her own influence there by enlisting the support of the local ruling classes. In 1916 the High Commissioner for Egypt, which had been declared a British protectorate, immediately after Turkey's entry into the war promised King Hussein of Mecca that His Majesty's Government would support the creation of an Arab sovereign state under the Hashimite dynasty. Hussein declared a "Holy War" on

Turkey, the Arab forces being led by Hussein's son, Emir Feisal, who was greatly aided and abetted by the British agent "Lawrence of Arabia".

At the same time the Entente powers were busy concluding a secret agreement for the partition of the Ottoman Empire among themselves.

The anti-imperialist movement also developed in many African countries during the war years. There was fighting from the outset between the Entente powers and Germany in Southern Sahara. All the German colonies in Africa, with the exception of German East Africa, were seized by the British and French. Africans were conscripted by force to serve as soldiers, workers and bearers.

The local population sought to escape these impositions by fleeing from their homes, and sometimes (as in Dahomey and the Ivory Coast) organised open resistance. A revolt broke out against the English planters in Nyasaland. In the Union of South Africa massive strikes took place, and in 1917 the African workers held their first conference and formed the Industrial Workers League, which was to lead a strong protest movement against the system of special passports for Africans and other forms of racial discrimination.

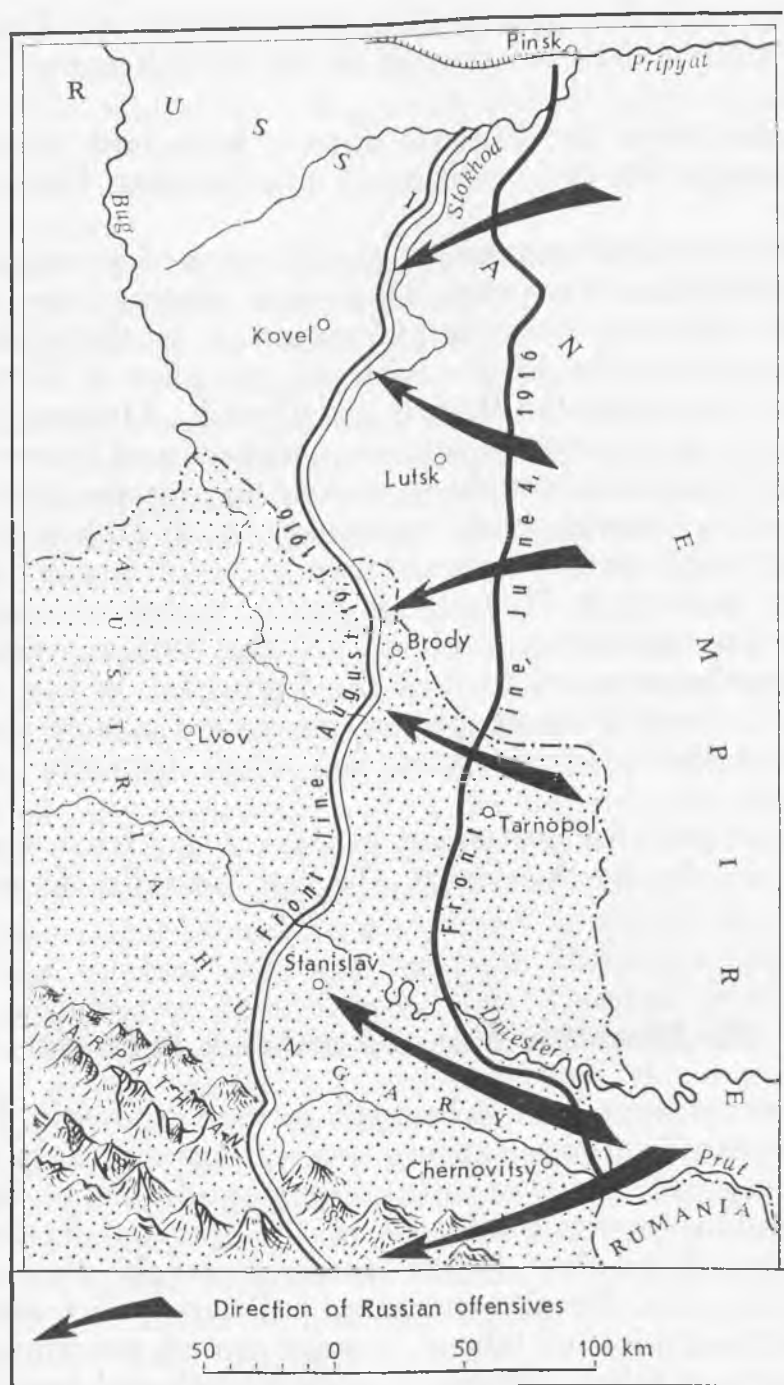
The anti-imperialist movement in Asia and Africa was given a powerful stimulus by the Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917.

The Mounting Tide of Revolution in Russia

As the war dragged on it brought serious economic damage to many European countries, causing severe food shortages and leading to a sharp deterioration in the living conditions of the masses. The tremendous profits made out of the war by the bourgeoisie made all the more clear to the common people the imperialist nature of the war. Despite increased military-police surveillance and the militarisation of labour, a mass protest movement against the war and capitalist oppression rapidly gathered momentum on the home front in the belligerent countries.

In the second year of the war there were large street demonstrations in Germany, and there was an outbreak of strikes in France and England. In the spring of 1916, an Irish rebellion against British rule broke out, which was suppressed by British troops.

In tsarist Russia, whose economy was less equipped than that of the other major belligerent powers to take the burden of the war, the strain on the economy and food shortages were particularly severe.



BRUSILOV BREAK-THROUGH, 1916

Even the army was left short of supplies and equipment. In June 1916, the Russians launched a new offensive under General Brusilov, and broke through the Austrian front, practically annihilating two Austro-Hungarian armies, occupying Galicia and Bukovina. Yet they were unable to follow up this victory, since in the decisive battles the Russian artillery found itself short of shells.

The soldiers' rations were gradually reduced, and as if the strain of positional warfare were not enough, on the Russian soldiers fell the added burden of hunger. Corruption was rife in army supplies, and as rumours to this effect spread among the soldiers, so disaffection increased.

Meanwhile the hungry women left at home to fend for themselves, broke into bread shops and made protest marches through the streets bearing anti-war slogans. The strike movement soon acquired a political colouring. In 1916, on the anniversary of "Bloody Sunday", the workers of Petrograd (as St. Petersburg had been renamed at the outbreak of the war with Germany) staged a demonstration, marching through the streets singing revolutionary songs and bearing aloft banners with the slogan "Down with the War!" Peasant unrest increased in the countryside. The Minister of the Interior warned the Tsar: "The whole countryside is seething with the spirit of 1905." In the summer of 1916 the workers of Central Asia and Kazakhstan revolted against tsarist colonial rule.

Military reverses and the danger of a new revolutionary upheaval gave rise to opposition among the bourgeoisie and some of the landowners. The bourgeois-landowner faction in the Duma united in the so-called Progressive Bloc, and demanded the establishment of a responsible government capable of "commanding public confidence", crushing the revolutionary movement and leading the war to a victorious conclusion.

However, the ruling camarilla were scornful of the Duma leaders' proposals. Tsar Nicholas II's German consort, Empress Alexandra, wrote of them: "These creatures are trying to play a part and interfere in matters they have no business meddling with. . . . They would do far better to occupy themselves with questions of drainage. . . ."

The weakness of the tsarist government was clearly reflected in the frequent ministerial changes. In the first two years of the war Russia had no less than four Premiers and six Ministers of the Interior. Yet these ministers had little authority even among the empire's ruling circles. Behind them loomed larger and larger the ugly figure of Grigory Rasputin, the Empress's favourite. The ignorant, half-literate Siberian peasant cunningly exploited the susceptibility to superstition and mysticism of the court ladies, setting himself up as a "saint" and "clairvoyant". Bringing the Empress, and through her the Tsar, completely under his spell, Rasputin meddled freely in the affairs of state and even tried to influence the strategic plans of the tsarist High Command.

By the end of 1916, even the most ardent monarchists had become convinced of the need to remove the Tsar if revolution were to be averted. They decided to begin by assassinating Rasputin,

hoping that this act might force Nicholas to alter his policy and adopt a line more favourable to the bourgeoisie and the landowners. The assassination was carried out in the home of Prince Yussupov, a well-known money-bag, and the body was cast into the frozen Neva. However, this terrorist act brought no change in tsarist policy. The ship of state of the tsarist autocracy sailed full-speed ahead towards its own impending doom.

The Overthrow of the Autocracy

At the beginning of 1917 popular discontent in Russia sharply increased. The cold winter of privation incurred by the war was particularly hard to bear. There was a serious fuel shortage in the capital and food supplies were running very low. In February, the vast city of Petrograd with its two million inhabitants had only enough flour left to last ten days and only enough fats for three days. Long queues of women stood outside the bread shops, in the bitter frost, for hours on end.

Faithful to the revolutionary traditions of 1905, the Petrograd proletariat staged massive strikes. In January 1917, on the twelfth anniversary of "Bloody Sunday", 150,000 workers went on strike. On March 3, the workers of the Putilov Plant, one of the largest factories in the city, stopped working. The management ordered a lock-out, and the workers took to the streets where they were joined by women from the bread queues. Workers of other factories came out in sympathy.

By March 8, 90,000 workers were out on strike, and two days later the strike had become a general one, with 250,000 taking part. The streets were strewn with leaflets printed by the Petrograd Committee of the Bolshevik Party, with "Down with the Tsarist Monarchy! Down with the War! Long Live the Fraternity of the Workers of the World!"

The tsarist military leaders sent troops to disperse the demonstrators. Surrounded by women imploring them not to fire on the people, the soldiers hesitated. On one of the main squares (now named Uprising Square) when a police officer gave the order to fire at the crowd, a Cossack rushed at him brandishing his sabre.

On March 11, there was street fighting all day in various parts of the capital. Nicholas was hundreds of miles away, at General Headquarters near Mogilev. Mikhail Rodzyanko, Chairman of the Duma, sent wire after wire entreating the Tsar to form a new government enjoying the confidence of the country. But Nicholas did not intend to make any concessions. "That fat Rodzyanko has been writing me all sorts of rubbish again," he informed his wife.

On the morning of March 12, military cadets of the Volynsky Regiment revolted and killed their commander, and joined the

workers in the streets. After this various other regiments of the city garrison revolted en masse and went over to the side of the revolution. The arsenal was captured, and the workers seized 40,000 rifles. Police headquarters and law-courts were peppered with fire. The revolting regiments and workers broke into the jails and freed the political prisoners. Gendarmes were disarmed in the streets and tsarist ministers and generals were placed under arrest.

"Measures should be taken immediately as tomorrow will be too late," Rodzyanko wired the Tsar. Nicholas replied with an order to suspend the Duma.

By the evening of March 12, Petrograd was in the hands of the insurgent people. According to the calendar then officially in force in Russia the date was February 27, and the second Russian revolution which triumphed in the capital is thus known as the February Revolution.

While the revolutionary storm was sweeping through the streets of Petrograd, the terrified bourgeois leaders in the Duma were hastily forming a Provisional Committee. On the same day (March 12), the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies was formed, and held its first session. On learning this, the following day the Duma Committee announced that it was taking over the reins of government. Conciliators among the leaders of the Soviet readily sanctioned this decision. On March 15, a Provisional Government was formed, in which most of the Cabinet ministers were members of bourgeois parties. The only "democrat" was the lawyer Kerensky, who bandied Leftist phrases about in the Petrograd Soviet. He became Minister of Justice.

The same day railway workers held up the Tsar's train on the way to Petrograd at Pskov, and then and there, in his railway carriage, the Tsar was forced to sign a document of abdication.

The tsarist regime had fallen. It had collapsed thanks to the victory of the revolutionary forces of the Russian people led by the heroic working class and supported by the vast peasant masses, whose sons, dressed in army uniform, had at last taken a firm stand on the side of the revolution. All the peoples of Russia and progressives everywhere welcomed the news of the overthrow of the tsarist autocracy with gladdened hearts.

The Revolutionary Crisis in Europe

As the war dragged on with its endless train of sacrifices, suffering and hardship for millions of people, popular discontent began to mount. In most of the countries that were at war,

and especially in Russia, Austria-Hungary and Germany, this discontent began to manifest itself in open disturbances and the political barometer began to rise sharply.

When, in September 1914, Lenin had predicted that the imperialist war would lead to revolution and that every effort must be bent towards that aim, his words were met with open incredulity and scorn by the social-chauvinists, and ironic smiles and scepticism by the Centrists.

Yet only three years later Lenin's views had been thoroughly confirmed by events. In March 1917 (February according to the old calendar) the Russian revolution had started in Petrograd, and led within a few weeks, with only very slight resistance, to the overthrow of the Romanov dynasty which had ruled the country for three centuries.

The February Revolution in Russia was only the first of a series of revolutions that rocked Europe. In October 1918, the Hapsburg dynasty was overthrown and the Austro-Hungarian Empire disintegrated. In November, 1918, revolution triumphed in Germany, sweeping away the House of Hohenzollern from the throne, so that the proud, haughty Kaiser Wilhelm II was sent scurrying to seek refuge in Holland, abandoning his family.

Just as Lenin had predicted, the imperialist war in Europe had turned into a civil war.

The Path to Socialist Revolution

Although conciliators allowed the bourgeoisie to seize the reins of government in Russia, the bourgeois Provisional Government was obliged to reckon with the new form of power embodied in Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. A strange situation arose, which Lenin referred to as "dual power".

Under pressure from the masses, the leadership of the Soviets was forced to abandon its conciliatory line and adopt measures which ran counter to the political course of the Provisional Government. Thus, on the instance of the Petrograd Soviet, a workers' militia was formed, people's courts chosen, and special elected soldiers' committees created in every army unit, to exercise control over commanding officers.

In April 1917, Lenin returned to Russia, and immediately launched the appeal for the peaceful transfer of all power to the Soviets: "No Support for the Provisional Government! All Power to the Soviets!"

Under Lenin's leadership the Bolsheviks got busy with the political education and organisation of the masses, exposing conciliators, and securing a majority in the executive organs of the

Soviets. The aim was the peaceful development of the revolution from its bourgeois to its socialist stage.

Lenin's ideas began to carry more and more influence. The people longed for peace, yet the Provisional Government was for continuing the imperialist war, under the slogan "Carry the War to a Victorious Conclusion". In June the Russian armies had begun an abortive offensive on Lvov, and in September Riga was treacherously surrendered to the Germans. The anti-popular policy of the bourgeois ministers caused mounting discontent among the workers and peasants who desired peace, bread and freedom. But the Provisional Government made no effort to satisfy the popular demands.

In July 1917, crowds of workers and soldiers came out into the streets of Petrograd demanding the transfer of all power to the Soviets. On orders from the Provisional Government this peaceful demonstration was fired at by counter-revolutionary troops. With the support of the conciliators the bourgeoisie then assumed complete power, and Kerensky became Premier. Repressions against Bolsheviks were instigated, and as his life was in danger, Lenin was forced to go into hiding in a deserted spot outside the capital, near lake Razliv.

The peaceful period of the revolution was over. The Sixth Bolshevik Congress, which met in secret, called on the working class in alliance with the peasantry to overthrow the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and take power into their own hands by force, through armed uprising. This was the call for socialist revolution.

CHRONICLE OF EVENTS

B. C.

Second half of 4th millennium	Slavery develops in the oldest known civilisations of Egypt and Mesopotamia. Earliest surviving examples of writing.
c. 2150-16th cent.	Middle Kingdom in Egypt.
c. 2369	Unification of Mesopotamia by Akkad.
2024	Mesopotamia invaded by Amorites and Elamites.
First half of 2nd millennium	Civilisations practising slavery emerge in Asia Minor.
	Founding of the Babylonian Kingdom, and its Golden Age under Hammurabi.
18th-17th cent.	Alphabetic writing, the Sinaitic script.
1700-1570	Hyksos enslavement of Egypt.
16th cent. to 1050	The New Kingdom in Egypt.
15th cent.	Hittite Kingdom in Asia Minor at its height.
15th-13th cent.	Achaean period in Greece.
Second half of 2nd millennium	Conquests of Pharaoh Tuthmosis III.
Middle of 2nd millennium	Beginning of Shang-Yin state in China.
1400	Religious reforms in Egypt under Pharaoh Amen- hotep IV.
1317-1251	Campaigns of Ramses II.
Middle of 2nd millennium	Ganges Valley civilisation.
12th cent.	Trojan War.
1122-771	Invasion of Greece by the Dorians.
	Chou Empire in China.
11th-9th cent.	Homeric period in Greece.
End of 2nd-beginning of 1st millennium	Aryan tribes enter northern Iran.
Beginning of 1st millennium	Rise of Kingdom of Urartu.
10th cent.	Phoenician towns florescent.

8th cent.	Urartu at its zenith.
753	High watermark of Assyrian power.
8th-6th cent.	Founding of Rome (traditional).
8th cent.	Greek colonisation at its height.
End of 7th cent.	Florescence of Greek cities in Asia Minor.
6th cent.	Rise of Empire of the Medes.
	Etruscans extend their power over Latium.
	Rise of Persia.
6th-5th cent.	Spread of Buddhism in India.
594	Solon's reforms in Athens.
586	Babylonians capture Jerusalem. End of Kingdom of Israel.
550	Cyrus of Persia subdues Medes.
547	Cyrus conquers Armenia and Cappadocia.
546	Cyrus II conquers Lydia.
538	Fall of Babylon to the Persians.
525	Persian conquest of Egypt. Persian Empire founded.
510-509	Cleisthenes reforms the Athenian constitution.
509	Foundation of Roman Republic (traditional).
500-493	Ionian cities revolt against Persia.
500-449	The Persian Wars.
5th-4th cent.	The rise of Confucianism and Taoism in China.
490	Persian invasion of Attica. Greek victory at Marathon.
5th-3rd cent.	Warring States period in China.
480	Greek victories over Persians, on land at Thermopylae, and at sea off Salamis.
479	Battles of Plataea and Mycale: Greek victories on land and at sea respectively. Persian invasion repulsed.
478	Delian League founded (first Athenian naval alliance).
Mid-5th cent.	Democracy flourishing in Athens.
431-404	Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta.
395-386	Corinthian War.
390	Sack of Rome by Gauls.
378	Second Athenian naval alliance.
343-290	The Samnite Wars. Rome extends hegemony over Central Italy.
334-324	Eastern campaigns of Alexander the Great.
324	Foundation of the Maurya dynasty in India.
321-276	The dissolution of Alexander's Empire: the struggle between his successors. Rise of Hellenistic states.
280-275	Campaigns of Pyrrhus, King of Epirus, in Italy and Sicily.
264-241	First Punic War.
218-201	Second Punic War.

216	Roman defeat at Cannae.
215-205; 200-197; 171-167	Rome at war with Macedonia.
149-146	Third Punic War: Carthage destroyed.
146	Sack of Corinth. Greece becomes vassal of Rome.
140-87	China flourishing under the Han dynasty.
136-132	First Servile War: revolt of slaves in Sicily under Eunus.
133-123	Agrarian revolt of Roman plebeians. Reforms of Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus.
104-99	Second Servile War.
90-88	The Social War: revolt of Italian towns against Rome.
89-64	Rome at war with Mithridates VI of Pontus.
73-71	Third Servile War: great revolt of slaves in southern Italy under Spartacus.
65-63	Pompey's eastern campaign.
60	First Triumvirate: Pompey, Caesar, Crassus.
58-51	Caesar's conquest of Gaul.
54-51	Revolt of Gauls against Romans.
54-53	Campaign of Crassus against Persians.
49-45	Roman Civil War. Julius Caesar becomes dictator.
44, March 15	Murder of Caesar.
43-31	Second Triumvirate: Antony, Octavian, Lepidus.
31-30	Civil War breaks out again.
27-14 A.D.	Egypt subdued by Romans.
	Octavian rules Roman Empire as Augustus Caesar.

A.D.

1st cent.	Christianity spreads in eastern provinces of Roman Empire.
	Revolts against Rome in Gaul, Africa and Britain.
18-28	Revolt of the Red Brows in China.
66-70	Jewish Revolt in Palestine.
End of 1st-beginning of 2nd cent.	Roman Empire at the height of its power.
184-208	Revolt of the Yellow Headbands in China.
3rd cent.	Socio-political crisis in Roman Empire.
313	Edict of Milan: Christianity tolerated in Roman Empire.
330	Capital of Empire transferred to Constantinople.
370-380	Huns defeat Goths and invade Europe.
395	Final division of Roman Empire into East and West.
410	Sack of Rome by Visigoths under Alaric.
451	Invasion of Gaul by Huns under Attila repelled at Châlons.
455	Rome pillaged by Vandals.
590	

476	End of Western Roman Empire.
Middle of 5th-beginning of 8th cent.	Visigoth state in Spain.
Second half of 5th cent.	Emergence of early feudal state in Japan.
End of 5th cent.	Decline of Gupta state in India.
493-555	Ostrogoth kingdom in Italy.
532	Nika revolt in Constantinople.
535-555	Byzantium conquers Ostrogoth kingdom in Italy.
563-567	Ephtalite state destroyed by Turks. Turkish Khanate establishes hegemony over states of Central Asia.
568-c.600	Lombard kingdom founded in Italy.
583-586	Rising in Central Asia.
589	Unification of China.
637-651	Iran conquered by Arabs.
645	Taikwa reforms in Japan.
661-750	Omayyad Caliphate.
End of 7th-beginning of 8th cent.	Silla state in Korea.
750-945	Abbasid Caliphate (spiritual power up to 1258).
816-837	Peasant revolts under Babek in Azerbaijan and western Iran.
819-999	Samanid dynasty in Central Asia.
9th cent.	Emergence of the state of ancient Rus.
829	Arabs expelled from Iran.
Second half of 9th cent.	Unification of Anglo-Saxon kingdoms in England under Wessex.
950	Syria, Egypt and Palestine throw off Arab rule.
Second half of 10th cent.	Independent Vietnamese state.
1066	Emergence of Polish state.
1096-1099	Norman conquest of England.
1127	First Crusade.
1147-1149	Han-Jurchen state founded in northern China.
1189-1192	Second Crusade.
1215	Third Crusade.
1237-1240	Signing of Magna Carta in England.
1242, April 5	Khan Batu's hordes conquer the Russian principalities.
1258	The Battle on the Ice: Russians defeat Teutonic Knights on Lake Peipus.
1265	Mongols capture Baghdad.
1270	First English parliament.
1302	Last (Eighth) Crusade.
1337-1453	States-General convened in France for first time.
1356	The Hundred Years' War.
	Golden Bull regulates imperial elections in such a way as to place power in the hands of German princes.

1380	Battle of Kulikovo: first major Russian victory over Golden Horde.
1381	Peasant revolt in England under Wat Tyler.
1410	Battle of Grünwald (Tannenberg): Poles and Lithuanians break power of Teutonic Knights.
1419-1437	Hussite Wars in Bohemia.
1453	Fall of Constantinople to the Turks: end of Byzantine Empire.
1455-1485	The Wars of the Roses.
1480	Rus throws off Tartar-Mongol yoke.
1492	Columbus discovers the New World.
1497-1498	Vasco da Gama finds sea route to India.
1517	Beginning of the Reformation in Germany.
1519-1522	Magellan makes first circumnavigation of the world.
1524-1525	Peasant War in Germany.
1526	Great Mogul Empire founded in India.
1566	Beginning of bourgeois revolution in the Low Countries.
1572, August 24	St. Bartholomew massacre in France.
1603	First Dutch colony on the island of Java. Tokugawa shogunate founded in Japan.
1627-1645	Peasant War in China.
1640-1660	English Bourgeois Revolution.
1640, April-May	Short Parliament.
1640-1653	Long Parliament.
1641, November	"Grand Remonstrance" of Parliament to Charles I.
1642, August	Outbreak of English Civil War.
1644-1683	Revolts of Chinese provinces against Manchu rule.
1648-1654	Ukrainian revolt under Bogdan Khmelnytsky against Polish rule, for union with Russia.
1649, January 30	Execution of Charles I of England.
May 19	England proclaimed Republic.
1651	Navigation Act passed by the English Parliament.
1653, December 16	Cromwell dissolves Parliament, becomes Lord Protector.
1654, January	Union of Russia and the Ukraine.
1654	Ireland and Scotland declared part of England.
1654-1667	Russo-Polish war.
1660	English Restoration: Stuarts return to the throne.
1667-1671	Peasant revolt led by Stepan Razin in Russia.
1674	Independence of Maharashtra proclaimed.
1688-1689	Glorious Revolution in England.
1689	Treaty of Nerchinsk between Russia and China.

1699	Treaty of Karlowitz between Turkey, Austria, Poland and Venetia.
1700-1721	Northern War between Russia and Sweden.
1701-1714	War of the Spanish Succession.
1709, June 27	Battle of Poltava: Russian victory over Swedes.
1710-1715	Peasant revolt in the Punjab.
1711	Peter the Great establishes Senate.
1721	Peace of Nystad ends Northern War. Russia proclaimed Empire.
1728	Treaty of Kyakhta between Russia and China.
1739	Nadir Shah of Persia sacks Delhi.
1740-1748	War of the Austrian Succession.
1756-1763	Seven Years' War between England and France.
1757	Closing of Chinese ports (except Macao) to foreign trade.
1715-1759	Chinese conquest of Jungaria and Kashgaria.
1764	English defeat joint forces of Nabob of Oudh and Afghans at Buxar.
1767-1799	Struggle of the principedom of Mysore against the British.
1768-1774	Russo-Turkish War.
1774	Treaty of Kuchuk-Kainarji: Turkey makes big concessions to Russia.
1769	China annexes Burma.
1773-1775	Peasant rebellion in Russia led by Pugachov.
1774, September 5 to October 26	First Continental Congress of Colonies.
1775-1783	The American War of Independence.
1775	Second Continental Congress opens in Philadelphia.
1776, July 4	Declaration of Independence of the United States of America.
1783	Crimea annexed by Russia.
September 3	Treaty of Versailles: American independence recognised.
1785	Catherine II's "Letter of Grace to the Nobility".
1787	Second Constitution of the United States drafted.
1788-1790	Vietnam recognises Chinese protectorship.
1789	American Congress passes the Bill of Rights.
July 14	The Storming of the Bastille marks the beginning of the French Revolution.
August 4-11	Decrees of the French Constituent Assembly freeing peasants from feudal obligations for compensation.
August 26	French Declaration of the Rights of Man.
October 5-6	The march on Versailles.
November	Decree of the French Constituent Assembly confiscating Church lands.

1791, June 14	Le Chapelier's law forbidding workers' leagues in France.
August 27	First anti-French coalition formed by Austria and Prussia.
September 6	French Constitution adopted.
1792, April 20	France declares war on Austria.
August 10	Popular uprising in Paris: monarchy overthrown.
September 21	National Convention opened. France proclaimed Republic.
1792-1807	Reforms of the Turkish Sultan Selim III.
1793, January 21	Execution of Louis XVI.
February 1	France declares war on England.
May 31-June 2	Popular uprising in Paris. Jacobins establish revolutionary dictatorship.
June 3-July 17	Feudal rights and obligations abolished without compensation.
June 24	Convention adopts new French Constitution.
July 13	Assassination of Marat.
1794, March-April	Arrest and execution of Hébertists and Dantonists.
July 27	Counter-revolution of the 9th Thermidor.
1795, August 22	Constitution of the Year III passed in France.
1795-1799	The Directory.
1796	Conspiracy of Equals led by Gracchus Babeuf.
1796-1804	Peasant revolt in China led by the White Lotus secret society.
1798, May-June	Vinegar Hill rebellion in Ireland.
1798-1802	Second coalition against France (England, the Kingdom of Naples, Austria, Russia and Turkey).
1799, November 9-10	Coup d'état of the 18th Brumaire: Napoleon comes to power.
1799-1804	Consulate rules France.
1799	England conquers Mysore.
1801, February 9	Peace of Lunéville between France and Austria.
1802, March 27	
August 2	Peace of Amiens between Britain and France.
1803-1805	Napoleon proclaimed Consul for life.
	East India Company makes war on Maratha states.
1804, May 18	Napoleon crowned Emperor.
1805, August	Third coalition against France (Britain, Russia, and Austria).
October 21	Battle of Trafalgar: British navy defeats combined Franco-Spanish fleet.
December 2	Battle of Austerlitz.
December 26	Peace of Pressburg between France and Austria.
1806, September	Fourth coalition against France (Britain, Prussia, Russia, Saxony and Sweden).

1806-1807	Continental System: Napoleon declares blockade on England.
1807, February 8	Battle of Preussisch-Eylau between Russians and French.
June 14	Battle of Friedland.
July 7	Treaty of Tilsit between France and Russia.
1809	Fifth anti-French coalition (Austria and Britain).
October 14	Treaty of Schönbrunn: Austria makes peace with France.
1810-1815	First stage of Latin American wars of liberation.
1811, July 5	Venezuela proclaimed Republic.
1811-1812	Luddite movement in England.
1812, June 24	Napoleon invades Russia with Grande Armée.
September 7	Battle of Borodino.
September 14	French troops enter Moscow.
1813, July 1	English Parliament repeals monopoly of East India Company in trade with India.
October 16-19	Battle of the Nations at Leipzig.
1814, March 31	Allied armies enter Paris.
April 6	Restoration of Bourbon dynasty in France.
1814, October	Congress of Vienna (to June 1815).
1814	Bourbon dynasty restored in Spain.
1815, March-June	The Hundred Days: Napoleon makes last bid for victory.
June 18	Napoleon's final defeat at Waterloo.
September 26	Holy Alliance formed.
1816, July 9	Declaration of the Independence of the eleven United Provinces of La Plata (became Republic of Argentina in 1826).
1817-1818	England disbands the Maratha confederation.
1819, August 16	Peterloo Massacre: military disperses meeting for parliamentary reform at Manchester.
December 17	Republic of Great Colombia proclaimed.
1820-1823	Revolution in Spain.
1820-1821	Revolution in Italy.
1821, March	Beginning of Greek War of Independence.
September 28	Mexican declaration of independence.
1822, September 7	Brazil declares independence.
1823, April 7	Central America adopts Act of Independence.
1824-1826	First Anglo-Burmese War.
1824-1829	Russo-Turkish War.
1825, December 14	Decembrist uprising in St. Petersburg.
1830, February 3	Treaty of London: Greek independence recognised.
June 14	French troops invade Algeria.
July 27-29	July Revolution in France.
1831-1833	War between Egypt and Turkey.
1831, 1834	Revolts of Lyons textile workers.
1832, June 4	Parliamentary Reform Bill passed in England.

1833, July 8	Treaty of Unkiar-Iskelessi between Russia and Turkey.
1834	Abolition of feudal military land-tenure in Turkey.
1839	Britain annexes Aden.
November 3	Tanzimat reform programme announced in Turkey.
1839-1840	Second Turco-Egyptian war.
1839-1842	First Anglo-Afghan War.
1839-1842	First Opium War (Britain versus China).
1839-1848	Chartist movement in England.
1842, August 29	Treaty of Nanking, Britain's first unequal treaty with China. Britain acquires Hongkong.
1844, June 4-5	Revolt of Silesian textile workers.
1844	USA and France sign unequal treaties with China.
1845-1846, 1848-1849	Anglo-Sikh wars.
1846-1848	War between USA and Mexico.
1847, June	League of the Just becomes Communist League.
1848, February	<i>Manifesto of the Communist Party</i> by Marx and Engels.
February 22-24	Revolution in Paris. July Monarchy overthrown.
February 24	Republic proclaimed in France.
March 13-15	Rising in Vienna.
March 15	Revolution in Hungary.
March 17-22	Revolution in Venetia: Republic proclaimed.
March 18-19	Rising in Berlin.
March 18-22	Uprising in Milan.
May 15-16	Neapolitan uprising crushed.
May 18	All-German Parliament opens in Frankfurt.
June 12-17	Rising in Prague.
June 23-26	Workers of Paris revolt.
November 4	French Constituent Assembly passes Constitution of the Second Republic.
November 15	Rising in Rome.
December 5	Prussian Constituent Assembly dissolved.
December 10	Louis Napoleon elected President of the French Republic.
1848-1852	Babist uprising in Iran.
1849, April 14	Hungarian Diet proclaims Hungary independent.
May 3-July 23	Uprisings in Saxony, Baden and the Palatinate.
June 16	Frankfurt Parliament disbanded.
August 22	Venetian Republic falls to Austrians.
August	Hungarian revolution suppressed.
1850-1856	T'ai-P'ing Uprising in China.
1851	T'ai-P'ing revolutionaries set up "Heavenly Kingdom of Great Prosperity".
December 2	Coup d'état by Louis Bonaparte.

1852, December 2	Second Empire established in France: Louis Bonaparte becomes Napoleon III.
1853-1856	Crimean War.
1854, March 31	First Japanese-American treaty.
1855, February 7	First Russo-Japanese treaty.
1856-1860	Second Opium War (Britain and France against China).
1857-1859	"Indian Mutiny" developing into popular uprising against British rule.
1858	China signs unequal treaties of Tientsin with Britain, France, Russia and USA.
1858-1862	French campaigns in Vietnam.
1859	Moldavia and Walachia unite to form independent Kingdom of Rumania.
1860, October-November	Peking treaties between China, Britain, France and Russia.
1861, February 18	Kingdom of Italy proclaimed.
March 3	Abolition of serfdom in Russia.
(February 19)	
1861-1865	American Civil War.
1861	Land and Freedom secret society founded in Russia.
1863	Polish Insurrection (Jan. 1863-March 1864).
May	General Association of German Workers founded.
August 11	Cambodia becomes French protectorate.
1864, September 28	International Working Men's Association (First International) founded.
1865, January 31	Abolition of slavery in USA.
1867, February 8	Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy established.
August 15	Second parliamentary Reform Bill passed in England.
1867-1868	Bourgeois revolution in Japan (Meiji restoration).
1869, August 7-9	Inaugural Congress of German Social-Democratic Party in Eisenach.
1870, July 19	Outbreak of Franco-Prussian War.
September 1-2	French armies capitulate at Sedan.
September 4	Rising in Paris. Fall of Second Empire. Government of National Defence formed.
1871, January 18	Wilhelm I of Prussia proclaimed Emperor of Germany.
January 28	Paris capitulates. Armistice signed between France and Prussia.
January	Unification of Italy completed.
March 18	Uprising in Paris. National Guard Central Committee assumes power.
March 19-27	Uprisings in France: Communes proclaimed in Marseilles, Lyons, Toulouse and other towns.

1871, March 26-28	Elections held and Paris Commune proclaimed.
April 16	Germany adopts imperial Constitution.
May 10	Peace signed between Germany and France at Frankfurt-on-Main.
May 28	Paris Commune crushed.
1875, May 23-26	Socialist Workers' Party of Germany founded at Gotha Congress.
1876	Populist underground revolutionary organisation founded in Russia (named Land and Freedom from 1878).
	Workers' Labour Party founded in USA (name changed to Socialist Labour Party in 1877).
1877, April 12	Britain annexes the Transvaal.
1877-1878	Russo-Turkish War.
1878, June 4	Cyprus Convention between Britain and Turkey: Cyprus ceded to Britain.
June 13-July 13	Congress of Berlin: general Balkan settlement.
1878-1880	Second Anglo-Afghan War.
1878-1890	Anti-socialist law in force in Germany.
1879, October	French Workers' Party founded.
1880-1882	France seizes part of the Congo.
1881, March 1	Tsar Alexander II assassinated by Populists.
November 15	Federation of organised trade unions and labour leagues founded in USA (to become American Federation of Labour in 1886).
1882, May 20	Secret alliance between Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy—Triple Alliance.
July-September	British occupation of Egypt.
1883, October	Russian Marxist Emancipation of Labour Group founded.
1885, December	Indian National Congress party founded.
1886, January 1	British annexation of Burma.
1888, December-January 1889	Social-Democratic Party of Austria formed.
1889, July 14-20	Inaugural Congress of the Second International in Paris.
1890	Hungarian Social-Democratic Party founded.
1891, July	Bulgarian Social-Democratic Party founded.
1892	Italian Socialist Party founded.
1892-1893	Rumanian Social-Democratic Party founded.
1893, February 1	United States annexes Hawaii.
1893	Franco-Russian alliance.
	Independent Labour Party founded in Britain.
1894-1895	Sino-Japanese War.
1895, October 1	Madagascar becomes French protectorate.
October-December	The League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class founded in St. Petersburg on Lenin's initiative.
1895-1896	Italo-Abyssinian War.

1898, March 13-15	First Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party in Minsk.
April 21- August 12	Spanish-American War.
1899-1902	The Boer War.
1899-1901	The Boxer (I Ho T'uan) Uprising in China.
1900, February	Labour Representation Committee (LRC) founded in England (renamed Labour Party in 1906).
1901, May	Social-Democratic Party founded in Japan.
1903, July 30- August 23	Second Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party.
1904-1905	Appearance of two trends within the Party: the Bolshevik and the Menshevik.
	Russo-Japanese War.
1904, April 8	Anglo-French agreement on Egypt, Morocco and other colonial possessions.
1905, January 22	Peaceful demonstration in St. Petersburg dispersed with gunfire. Beginning of the First Russian Revolution.
January-February	General strike of Ruhr miners.
March	First Moroccan crisis (to January 1906).
June 27	Mutiny on the battleship <i>Potemkin</i> .
September	Mass political strike in Budapest.
October- November	Political strike throughout Russia.
October 30 (17)	Nicholas II publishes Manifesto promising the people political freedoms.
December	Armed insurrection in Moscow, Kharkov, Chita and other towns throughout the Russian Empire.
1905-1911	Revolution in Iran.
1908, July 23	"Young Turk" (bloodless) revolution.
October 5	Bulgarian independence proclaimed.
October 7	Annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary. Beginning of Bosnian crisis.
1910, August	Japan annexes Korea.
1910-1917	Mexican Revolution.
1911, July-November	Second Moroccan crisis.
October 10	Wuchang uprising marks beginning of Chinese Revolution (lasting to 1913).
1912, August 25	Founding of Kuomintang (National Party) in China.
October 9	First Balkan War (to May 30, 1913).
1913, June 29- August 10	Second Balkan War.
July	Beginning of the Second Revolution in China
1914, July 28	Austria-Hungary declares war on Serbia.
August 1	Germany declares war on Russia.
August 3	Germany declares war on France.

1914, August 4	German invasion of Belgium.
August 23	Britain declares war on Germany.
September 5-12	Japan declares war on Germany.
1915, January 18	Battle of the Marne.
	Japan presents her Twenty-One Demands to China.
May 23	Italy declares war on Austria-Hungary.
1916, February 21-	Battle of Verdun.
December 18	
July 1-	Battle of the Somme.
November 13	
1917, March 12	Bourgeois-Democratic Revolution in Russia: tsarism overthrown.
March 15	Provisional Government formed in Russia.
April 6	United States declares war on Germany.
June 16-	
July 7	First All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies.

REQUEST TO READERS

Progress Publishers would be glad to have your opinion of this book, its translation and design and any suggestions you may have for future publications.

Please send your comments to 21, Zubovsky Boulevard, Moscow, USSR.
